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AESTHETICS

A STUDY OF THE FINE ARTS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

By

JAMES K. FEIBLEMAN

Graduate Professor of Philosophy in Tulane University

DUELL, SLOAN AND PEARCE

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INTRODUCTION

Here is a volume of essays on aesthetics and the fine arts. It has been written from a viewpoint which is very old and at the same time very new. According to that philosophy by which Europe and America have lived during recent centuries, a nominalistic philosophy colored by Locke's distinction between primary physical "qualities" of relation and secondary sensational qualities of feeling, value was supposed to be entirely a matter of impressions, and hence subjective, while relations were entirely a matter of measurement, and hence objective. Thus art was held to be subjective and science alone believed to be objective. On such a scheme, science prospered; but art, despite its enormous personal claims, was relegated to an inferior position.

The greater amount of discussion which has taken place in recent decades concerning the meaning of art and the criticism of works of art has been maintained at a particularly low level because of the assumed subjective postulate. Interpretations of theory degenerated and judgments of works of art declined into questions of individual taste. However, the objective postulate, as carried by the philosophy of realism has a claim at least as great as the subjective postulate

of nominalism; and the recent revival of the former by thinkers of the English and American schools, from Reid to Whitehead, from Peirce to Jordan, suggests that a reconsideration of the foundations and interpretation of aesthetics and of art is called for.

This work, then, is the result of the application to aesthetic theory and artistic practice of two realistically metaphysical postulates: one, that there is a value in the world corresponding to what we experience as the feeling of the beautiful, responsible for the arousal of that feeling but at the same time ontologically independent of all such effects or interactions with human beings; two, that such independent aesthetic value is analyzable into relations of structure and function, so that for every value there is a relation, or structure or function, or a set of them, and conversely. The topic chosen could very well be described as the nature of art, with due regard for the many and varied meanings of 'nature'. The aim has been to emphasize the ontological lack of difference between art and other parts of nature. In this work—the chapters on psychological aspects included—ontology is deemed to be central to all questions of aesthetics and art.

The verification of a theory depends upon its support or allowance by facts. In the case of aesthetics the facts adduced are not final but explanatory. Hence it is possible to assert that the speculative is not opposed to the empirical. The understanding of art requires some familiarity with deductive logic together with an insight gained through familiarity with actual works of art. The worldly-wise poet who can use his innocence to organize and direct his knowledge will at least *deserve* to inherit the earth. The right sort of under-

standing is a sure path to appreciation. Such understanding must base itself upon our first named postulate and must include the comprehension that things are not beautiful because we appreciate them but rather we appreciate them because they are beautiful.

In a culture devoted chiefly to the application of science, the artist is a notable alien. Yet there is no valid reason to believe that an error in viewpoint must always be accepted as an insurmountable obstacle. The aim of this work is to take up a new perspective on an old position in such a way as to reveal how it can produce fresh reconciliations. For science and art are not mutually exclusive except as different methods of reaching a common goal. These chapters, despite much agreement with the evidence afforded by the previous labors of Schelling, Schopenhauer and Reynolds, have been done from an approach which is novel to art, and are intended to be models or samples of a philosophy of art rather than an exhaustive presentation of that philosophy. Thus the work is primarily positive, not critical; it offers more for approval than for disapproval. We need negative critics and their helpful iconoclasm; for even though adverse criticism is cheap, the deadwood of limitation and falsehood, of conventions maintained beyond their possibilities of justification, must be cleared away. But even more do we need constructive suggestions of the direction in which the truth may lie.

The chapters which form this book were written from a consistent plan, by a deliberate method, and with a view to their eventual publication together. The plan, a studied one, was to investigate the conditions of art as these might be found by starting from the postulates of the ontology of axiologic realism. But the plan was not to deduce an aesthet-

ics from a philosophy, merely to show that it is consistent with one. The method, by nature empirical, was expected to reach through experience with actual objects of art to the principles which such objects exemplify. Thus the methodological requirements of both induction and deduction are in a measure met and satisfied. To the extent to which this plan has been carried out successfully and this method followed, the book has an enveloping unity of purpose and execution.

Certain of these chapters have appeared in various journals, and my thanks are due to their editors for permission to reprint them here. "The Logical Value of the Objects of Art" was published by *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism;* "The Ontology of Art" by *The Personalist;* "The Meaning of Comedy" by *The Journal of Philosophy;* "The Psychology of the Artist" by *The Journal of Psychology;* "The Psychology of Art Appreciation" by *The Journal of General Psychology;* "The Place of Art in Human Culture" by *Les Etudes Philosophiques;* "The Hypothesis of Aesthetic Measure" and "The Scientific Outlook of Cézanne" by *The Philosophy of Science;* "The Theory of Hamlet" by *The Journal of the History of Ideas;* "The Decline of Literary Chaos" by *The Sewanee Review;* and "The Master Myth and the Modern Artist" by *Ethics.* "The Art of the Dance" was read before the annual meeting of *The American Society for Aesthetics* in Baltimore on September 19, 1946, and published by *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism.* "Human Life as a Fine Art" arose gradually from a student's notes of my lectures on Steffens which were delivered at Tulane University in the spring of 1944. My thanks also are due to the following for permission to use short quotations from books published by them: Cambridge University Press; Harper &

Brothers; Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc.; Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.; The Macmillan Company; and to the Oxford University Press; and also to the *Magazine of Art.*

J.K.F.

New Orleans
January, 1949

AESTHETICS

Part I

A THEORY OF AESTHETICS

THE aim of this Part is to present a systematic philosophy of art, a novel theory in that department of philosophy which is known as aesthetics. What is art—what is it in theory and in practice? What are its functions: logical, ontological, epistemological, psychological, methodological, scientific and cultural? What is its future? These are some of the questions to which this Part attempts to seek the answers, and if not to find them, at least to suggest some ways in which they might be found. As a full-fledged theory of art, the system is pointed toward examples in terms of which its propositions and consistency can hope to be illustrated, though to be sure the validity of a theory in no wise depends upon its illustrations.

Chapter I

ORIENTATIONS: THE LOGICAL VALUE OF THE OBJECTS OF ART

THE philosophy of art requires both art and philosophy. A theory of aesthetics to be valid must be deducible from some valid metaphysics and consistent with the actual practices prevailing in the world of art. This is a statement easier to make than to verify. How many will agree, for example, about the valid metaphysics? Nevertheless, the problems exist; and just as attempts have already been made to solve them, so they will continue to be made in the future, perhaps one day successfully. In an introductory chapter, little more comprehensive can be attempted than the barest outline of what such a scheme could be. The suggestion rather than the full exposition of a position leaves much to be desired, and any statement which is neither argued nor defended can claim to set forth only the program for a theory. Until later chapters can carry the development, the reader is left to expand the hypothesis for himself and to do his own verification as to its agreement, or disagreement, with experiences in the ways of art. In the meanwhile it should be possible to discern behind these notes

the metaphysics in terms of which they are rendered systematic.

We may begin by examining the role of the artist, since it is he who, in the popular opinion, is responsible for there being any art at all. It is true that he may be considered to be near the beginning of the temporal sequence in the production of a work of art, since without artists it is unlikely that there would be much art. There would be some art without him, however, for objects of art exist which were never the products of human hands. Consider, for instance, those wonderful wood carvings which have been modeled by the actions of rivers; few would deny their artistic merit.

Although first place in importance must be reserved for the work of art, the artist has his own significance, and this can only be explained in terms of the process of reaction. He is that human being whose extraordinary awareness renders him capable of serving as a medium for the functioning of the artistic method. He is a kind of sensitive receiving mechanism for the apprehension of value in communicable form, that is, of value in the range of symbolism where most significance and least material prevails. The passivity of his role has been underestimated; he is not a creator but a discoverer of beautiful things. The works of art for which he is given credit were always possible and are only actualized by him. Thus the artistic impulse is a drive instigated from without, by the beautiful aspects of external existence, and not originally an inner urge of the artist.

Although the artistic method works on external material *through* him and not *from* him, still it could not work *without* him. Only by chance can objects get themselves transformed into aesthetic objects without some assistance. But from the point of view of an object that would achieve the

condition of art, the logical thing to do, so to speak, is to provide itself with the services of an artist. Artists themselves are sometimes aware of this. They have sympathy for the serious problem which the artist constitutes for the object wishing to become a work of art. As one sculptor has so aptly observed, "How many good things one finds struggling for life in the awkward hands of their creators!" [1]

If everything that could be called art were to exist only inside the mind of the artist, it would be logical to consider aesthetics a branch of psychology. Just the opposite is true, however. The psychology of the artist is a branch of psychology, not of art. Its domain adjoins more closely those of other divisions of psychology than it does those of aesthetics. The impulses toward artistic endeavor, the materials which the artist uses and the finished works of art, all exist externally to the artist and have their effect upon him from the outside. The actual world, we may almost say, is itself responsible for those alterations of some of its parts which result in objects of art, since the conditions as well as the stimulus of art are in one sense foreign to the artist. He meets those conditions and reacts to that stimulus simply because, given his own capacity for highly sensitive impressions, he has to. As any great artist will testify, the conception of a work of art comes to him and asks to be executed. If he should ignore it, the request then becomes a command. Its production in either case is merely a result of his obedience to forces which are to some extent beyond his control.

The distinction between the artist as passive on the one hand and as active executor of the artistic process on the other lies in the difference between skill and technique. The

[1] Ahron Ben-Shmuel, "Carving: A Sculptor's Creed" in the *Magazine of Art*, vol. 33 (1940), p. 502.

skilled artist simply reacts to the artistic stimulus in a naive, *i.e.*, an uncontrolled way. The 'primitive,' that is, the untrained, artist does not lean upon any objective technique, as the trained artist does. Training requires control; it demands active participation and demands it in a way which is not explained so readily by the notion of reaction. A technique is an objective affair, involving practical formal details of procedure; it must be learned by severe application. The mind of the artist is involved in the process, but the process, as well as the finished product, must be understood to be independent of the artist.

Once a work of art has been completed, the usefulness to it of the artist, *qua* artist, comes to an end. He now stands outside it as completely as does any other spectator. As a critic of even his own work, he can have therefore only the status of an amateur. The statement of those psychological processes undergone by the artist while actively engaged in the production of a work of art cannot be adduced as an evaluation or full explanation of the worth of the work of art itself. Let us suppose that the play, *Tobacco Road,* was intended to be a serious drama but had a long career on the stage as a farcical comedy, or that *Alice in Wonderland* was originally intended to be regarded lightly but has assumed a serious mien before its endless audience. The work of art leads a life of its own, just as the artist does; it has its own value and validity, and engages upon its own adventures.

We may view the artistic method in action, as we have been doing, or we may attempt to make a more logical analysis of it. For there does exist a universal and logically consistent method of art, susceptible of abstraction from the particular instances of its exemplification. As Plato said, "The

same principle of inquiry holds through all the arts." [2] Artists at work at any date and place may thus rely implicitly upon a constant procedure. This is somewhat as follows. Actual things and events having merely pedestrian value suggest by means of induction the abstract hypothetical possibility of constructing other things which can reveal new relations and in terms of which greater value can be actualized. The hypothesis is next exemplified by deduction in a concrete work, the production of which is guided and corrected analogically in terms of the symbolic value sought by means of the hypothesis.

Thus far we have said nothing that would distinguish the making of a work of art from the making of a better mousetrap. All makers are engaged in imitating the independently ideal. The only difference between an article of utility and a work of art is that the latter is affectively referential. The article of utility illustrates in action its own value; it can be used. The work of art has no use *as* a work of art other than to refer significantly to greater value; it is a symbol, and its symbolic value, which depends upon the harmony of its parts, is its only artistic meaning. The artistic method is the method of *making;* what is made depends upon the level of reference involved. Works of art are peculiarly referential objects; they are good for nothing, we may say, except the reference to that value which we call beauty.

We cannot verify the steps which have been taken in any particular past instance of the artistic method, but let us for purposes of illustration suppose that we can. We may then imagine that there was an ordinary chair in Van Gogh's bedroom, a chair which other persons had viewed many times without having it suggest anything to them. To Van Gogh,

[2] *Ion*, 532, D.

however, it suggested the possibility of an ideal chair, and he almost felt the impact upon himself of the sensation of this ideal. It made him reach for it, so to speak, and in this process occasioned in his mind a universal diagram, which was certainly accompanied by an image, of the chair as it ought to be. Van Gogh, then, with the diagram of the chair in the foreground of his conscious mind, proceeded to imitate it with paint on canvas. The result is a painting, which falls as far short of Van Gogh's diagram as the diagram itself does of the ideal, but which is nevertheless aimed at the ideal.

The artistic method consists in the imitation of things as they ought to be. Plato conceived art as imitation, but thought that art was imitating things as they are. He said that there are three beds: God's ideal bed, the carpenter's actuality, and the painter's imitation, and he concluded that the painter as the producer of the most diluted version was "thrice removed from the truth." [3] He assumed, of course, that the painter was, in the production of his bed, imitating both the others, but in that assumption there was error. For the ideal bed is suggested to the painter's mind by the carpenter's actuality, yet it is the ideal alone which the painter is imitating. Thus he is no further from and no closer to the ideal than the carpenter. Both are producing beds in imitation of the ideal, but they produce different kinds of beds for different purposes. Without the carpenter's bed, it is doubtful if there would be any painter's; their uses are different, and assuredly, the carpenter's is a prerequisite for the painter. But, as value theorists never tire of pointing out, a great politician may be dependent upon his cook, but that does not prevent the art of ruling from being something higher in

[3] *Republic*, X, 596-8.

value than the culinary art. The painter's bed is 'higher' in value than the carpenter's.

The artistic method is seen to be a logical process involving both the inductive and the deductive methods and inseparably weaving into a single context both actual things and the abstract logical possibility of value. The most important part of the process, it must be admitted, is the artistic induction, which is the logical corresponding number of what has been called 'artistic intuition.' But since, from the point of view of logical analysis, artistic induction consists in the choosing of postulates for deduction, the fact remains that such inductive processes, and indeed the whole artistic method, rests upon the prior assumption of a logical scheme in terms of which the inductions are made. Thus although the insight of the 'creative' mind is an indispensable tool in the production of works of art, it yet remains true that the process as well as the final product of the system of art production possesses a strictly logical structure. The 'genius' of the artist lies largely in his ingenuity in choosing postulates, his foresight in selecting just those postulates which will be abundantly suggestive of actual deductions. Once the postulates have been chosen, he may exercise the remainder of his ingenuity in the determination of what deductions may be drawn and in what order. In a perfect work of art, all possible deductions would be drawn.

It should be added parenthetically that although the artist is seldom if ever explicitly aware of the logic in which he is involved, this does not detract from his contribution, which is considerable, but merely calls attention in another way to the fact that the end-product of the artistic process is entirely independent of the artist. The artistic method is a dependable one, since even explicitly held artistic theories

which are false do not necessarily mislead artists in their work. There are after all such phenomena as artists who do good work from bad theories. The reason for this is that all artists at work are actually following the true artistic theory which they hold implicitly. But in the artistic method, as in the scientific one, to work from a theory does not mean necessarily to be conscious of it.

It should be possible to abstract the artistic method from particular instances of its exemplification in practice, by close observation of what the artist does when he makes himself responsible for the existence of a great work of art (rather than by attentive listening to what he says). The artistic method thus abstracted would be of enormous assistance to those concerned with any artistic activity. Of course, the knowledge of such a method would by no means constitute an easy formula for anyone wishing to apply it. With an abstracted artistic method, it would not be possible for everyone to become an artist; the method would mean, however, that artists could be aided in the development of their activity, and that apprentices could be taught more than the mere imitation of the style of their masters. Minor artists would be able to advance art a little, instead of not advancing it at all, just as petty scientists manage to contribute something, however small, to the progress of science. And, finally, critics and appreciators would have a guide to the understanding, and hence also to the feeling of the beauty, of particular works of art.

But that the abstract logical structure of the work of art is important to aesthetics has become increasingly evident as we have proceeded in our investigation. It will be well at this point, therefore, to discuss the logic of art apart from artists

who rely upon it in the artistic method, and as distinct from the particular works of art which exemplify it.

All concrete things and events, like abstract systems, possess formal structures. This formal structure consists in a set of postulates, a chain of deductions which necessarily follow, and rigorous conclusions. This is not always the way in which the thing or event has been constructed historically, and it is not necessarily the way in which it is apprehended psychologically. But it is the logical form which the work of art has in virtue of what it is. The formal structure of a thing or event can only be examined by considering that thing or event in quasi-isolation from its environment. A thing or event may be abstracted from its context in the stream of actuality and considered as a self-contained system. The fact that the postulates may be implicit rather than explicit, the deductive implications inherent in the structure itself, and the conclusions tacitly pointed toward the meaning of the thing or event as a whole, does not alter the fundamentally logical validity of the structure.

Now, what is true of concrete things and abstract systems is also true of works of art. For works of art also have their formal logical structures, though these are not so readily obvious. As a matter of record, a close inspection of any work of art will bear out the truth of this contention. In arts which require a sequence of time for their expression, such as music, the drama, the novel, this structure is more obvious than it is in others, such as the plastic arts of painting and sculpture.[4] But the structure is equally present in both types of art; as

[4] Of course all concrete works of art require time for their unfolding. It is in time that the appreciation of a small piece of sculpture may take place. What is meant here is rather that some works of art, *e.g.*, a fugue, require a time sequence for their expression, whereas a carving is intended to be grasped as a whole, and there is no unfolding in the same time sense.

Plato said, "Order in motion is an imitation of the stable." [5] For instance, the 'theme and variations' scheme of many musical scores has a logical form which lies, obviously enough, on the surface. Indeed it is well known that any thorough musical appreciation must be grounded in an understanding of the form of the composition. The theme or themes announce the postulates, and the variations illustrate the deductions which are drawn from them. In the novel, much the same holds true. The characters and situations as the reader finds them at the outset are here the postulates; the actions and interactions of the characters are the deductions drawn; and the climax presents the necessary conclusions toward which everything else has moved. What is true of music and fiction is equally true of every other kind of work of art; the effectiveness may always be closely identified with a rigorous logical scheme which is present even if never presented as such.

We have next to examine the relation between logical scheme and effectiveness. A logical scheme may be present in every effective work of art but does not itself constitute that effect. Logic does not constitute value but amounts rather to a limitation on it. Logic delimits value and is its structure; the logic of art is describable in other words as the structure of beauty. What we have just said of logical relations may now be applied to value elections. Every thing and event is both a center of forces and a radiator of forces. As a center of forces it may be considered itself to consist in the value of its parts to the whole. As a radiator of forces it may be considered to consist in the value it has as a whole for other wholes. Thus beauty may be defined as the qualitative aspect of the intrinsic relations of things, the harmony of

[5] *Laws*, II, 653-4.

parts in the whole. And goodness may be defined as the extrinsic relations of things, the worth of wholes for other wholes. Thus the beautiful and the good are functionally related. A cameo is not likely to be as 'good' as a mural but is more likely to be closer to perfection, although both cameo and mural contain some goodness and some beauty. Any good may be viewed as beautiful by considering a whole and its value for another whole as themselves embraced as parts within a still larger whole. Thus beauty can never be good enough, which is another way of saying that beauty by itself is never enough.

In the field of art, then, the conception and the materials are the objective postulates in the framework from which an inferential network of values is derived and set forth. Art exemplifies the universal value through the particular object, and works of art are insights into the perfect world of possibility.

A knowledge of the nature of the work of art is most essential to the proper functioning of art criticism. Thus the critic of art should have as part of his equipment an acquaintance with the principles of aesthetics. Criticism can only be valid in terms of the knowledge and appreciation of formal structure, through the understanding of the objective occasion for feeling. Thus objective criteria must be the main concern of the critic. Grades of artistic value are discoverable in terms of the analysis of their formal structures. But at present, only logical criteria are available: the critic must judge in terms of the ambition of a work of art and in terms of its actual achievement. What does the work of art pretend to be and how close does it come to achieving its aim? At what was the artistic method in a particular instance aimed, and how close did it come to its mark? What are the

postulates of a given work of art and how fruitful have been the inferences made from them, that is, how general is their range of inclusion and how self-consistent is the system of the deductions themselves? How much of the world does a work of art organize, and how well? These are the leading questions for the art critic. The value of a work of art can best be assayed through an analysis of its logical form and extent. The limitations of language are such that we can only communicate a knowledge of logical relations. Hence the communication of values can only be accomplished through their logical relations or through another work of art, and thus has little place in art criticism.

The logic of art is thus the tool of the critic, who must train himself to be erudite rather than nervous. Critics without the proper philosophical preparation are merely highly impressionable people. In this sense, we have few art critics today; we have only those persons who set their sensibilities above the average, pretending to us that they feel more reliably than most. Of course, the *de gustibus* maxim is within limits valid: we do actually feel what we think we feel. Yet to accept this canon as sufficient for the criticism of art is to render us all equally efficient as art critics, for no one is willing to admit that his sensibilities are lower than another's. The fact is that no one really believes the value of a work of art to be purely a matter of opinion. It is not enough to feel correctly and to make from such correct feelings accurate judgments in the evaluation of works of art, even supposing this to be uniformly possible. The critic must also be prepared to explain why he holds the opinions he has; and since purpose can only be *explained* in terms of formal structure, he will not be prepared to do this so long as he believes that aesthetic value is subjective. Criticism, in other words, can

only be accomplished in terms of ambition and achievement—not the ambition and achievement of the artist, however, but rather of the work of art itself.

In addition to the limitation that critics today have fallen into the habit of judging works of art from purely subjective feeling, on the assumption that such feeling *is* the value of art, there is a further shortcoming of present-day criticism. This is its decidedly negative approach. We do not have critics in the grand sense; we have only criticizers. The true critic should take the affirmative view; he should regard the limitations of any artist as his own special liability, and should feel obliged to shoulder the collective responsibility for the production of good work. He should be an agent of the artistic, and not a patronizing spectator who through his special gifts is entitled to remain situated above the battle. Logic may be negative, but the organization of wholes containing value are positive in function and permit the analysis of value in positive terms. Thus the critic while dealing in logic also has something positive to set forth.

If the value of a work of art is objective to the critic, it is equally so to the appreciator. The value inheres in the work and lies potentially apprehensible in the relation between the work of art itself and the perspective in which appreciators can experience it. By 'perspective' here is meant not merely physical perspective. The addition of certain knowledge or the acquisition of special interest constitutes an important alteration in the perspective of an appreciator. To one who has already enjoyed Rembrandt but who fails to like El Greco, a little additional knowledge of problems and aims might be of assistance. Art appreciation, however, does not consist in any relation between work of art and appreciator, such that in the absence of an appreciator the value fails to

exist. It is possible for a work of art to have great aesthetic value without anyone being in a position to apprehend it. The value is actual not only to an actual appreciator but also to a possible perspective. It exists actually in any work of art having value, and is potentially present for appreciation. The flower that was born to blush unseen must have sweetness in order to be able to waste it on the desert air. Thus, once again, questions of taste and enjoyment properly belong to the psychology of art. To be an appreciator of art means to be placed in a certain perspective wherein the value of works of art can be felt, and this requires certain knowledge and peculiar sensibilities. A work of art is a power in the world, available to all those in whom interest develops its impact.

Art is not a mere matter of entertainment, except to those who regard it passively. It is an affair in which the return is apt to be in direct ratio to the extent of the investment. It brings pleasure but requires a definite strain. The enjoyment of beauty requires extreme attention, but it does not call for violent action. The reaction to the impact of art is passive and consists chiefly in love. By means of works of art, love finds an unlimited object of its affection, one which is common to all members of society. Such works are the particular symbolic media through which the individual members of society can feel together the love which constitutes the universe. But love cannot, like hatred, be resolved through action. Hence the act of loving is eventually an unendurable tension. It reveals a perfection which is unattainable, and hence occasions a stress upon the appreciator. This is the demand of the executive value of the good, which lies outside any work of art, no matter how large its intensive value of beauty. Thus while the beauty of art is more diffused than

the acuteness of the ugly, it is also, so far as actuality goes, limited. Art alone is not enough, even though it be an ingredient essential to the purposive life.

We have reached a point in the exposition at which it should be possible to exemplify our position by some cursory remarks in evaluation of contemporary movements in art. Great works of art are not especially helpful in illustration, since their perfection must be felt to be fully appreciated. But most movements which adopt principles and attempt to work from them are apt to produce art which is faulty; and in the description of faults rather than in perfections the bare bones of principles more readily show through.

We shall term successful art classic. Classic art deals with what is true and therefore perennially actual. It tends toward an absolutistic logical view in that it is mainly concerned with what remains the same. It always strives to copy the ideal of what-ought-to-be, and is thus affirmative and positive, revealing the intrinsicness of value for its own sake. An example is the sculpture of Phidias. Less successful art may be termed romantic. The romantic is concerned with those values which were actual but are now remote, the lost particularity of things and events, vividity which cannot be recaptured, events flowing by in the temporal order. It copies the actual, or what-is, and is thus concerned with the immediate and the half-impermanent. These two movements, the classic and the romantic, are themselves the classic (or the romantic) alternatives which are always available to the artist, and which do not exist absolutely pure in any work of art but are always mixed elements. Individual movements, however, tend to stress one as against the other and so impart a partisan character.

All modern movements in art are predominantly romantic, in keeping with the nominalistic interests of the age which demand that actual physical particulars alone be regarded as real. Realism,[6] for instance, would reproduce, faithfully and photographically, actuality just as it is and without any affective symbolization or tendencious selection in favor of eternal values. It seeks to imitate the actual rather than the ideal, and is thus romantic. But this movement, in the alembic of the artistic method, is itself a value which is, fortunately for its success as art, unrealistic. It cannot avoid imparting symbolic value to that which it works over, and so emphasizes detail to a degree which it never claims in anyone's actual experience. Responsible for the vogue of the cinema and the novel, realism in art has been carried too far. Few cameras or human eyes are as tediously insistent upon insignificant description as are the scenes and characters in the novels of Sinclair Lewis. Yet such an insistence carries with it the implied aesthetic import of atomic particularity: the whole, it says, is nothing but the sum of its parts. This is bad philosophy as well as bad art.

Primitivism is in many respects the opposite of realism. It calls for simplification of presentation, and hence for the elimination of insignificant detail. So-called because it is native to all forms of art in primitive societies, primitivism is accomplished in civilized societies only by the conscious exaggeration of simplicity. In civilized societies it occurs as a decadent movement—exercising healthful effects on artistic production. It is good when it eliminates the insignificant, but bad when it eliminates the significant as well, as it frequently does when carried too far.

[6] Realism in aesthetic theory is the equivalent of nominalism in philosophy. Realism in philosophy, at least in the medieval sense, is the opposite of nominalism.

Movements in art help to reveal the fact that a work of art is a social object. That is to say, its meaning can be said to exist only at the level of society, since it is part of the organization of elections within institutions involving human individuals. Its production is due to an actual person; its appreciation may be occasioned by one or more others.[7] Thus two persons at least are involved in the artistic process from production to appreciation. In addition, there is the actual thing or event which occasioned the initial reaction in the artist; and there is also the material upon which he works and which exists at a very low level indeed when considered apart from its artistic context. An actual landscape may suggest to the artist the altogether different picture which he wishes to paint, and the materials, such as oils and canvas, are in themselves almost worthless in comparison with the worth of the changes he manages to effect in them. Altogether, the artistic process is a complex affair, involving materials, persons and aesthetic values to be apprehended, and its end-product is an equally complex organization. But the resultant value is independent of materials and of persons: it cannot be limited to the values of the materials used or of the human beings concerned.

As social objects, works of art are indicative of the civilizations in which they are produced, being products of many of their influences. Saracenic art has much in common with other elements of Saracenic culture. But despite this close cultural affiliation, art always manages to be a little in advance of the conditions under which it arises. A degenerate civilization is most assuredly one which has reached its period of decline, while so-called degenerate art may be very great art indeed, destined to survive by many centuries the period

[7] Of whom the artist himself, of course, may be one.

which produced it. The artist is 'ahead of his time' by definition, since he pursues possible values rather than actual values; thus he walks in the vanguard of culture. The judgment of contemporary society can never be final as to the value of any given work of art.

Those who, like Schopenhauer, deprecate philosophy in comparison with art, fail to understand not only that the truth is always an aesthetic spectacle but also that every work of art contains the germ of a philosophy. Great art always reveals wide truth, but then so does philosophy. The presence of aesthetics as a branch of philosophy is evidence of its immaturity. Philosophy, the great mother of theory, is proudest of her children when they come of age, and, leaving the parental roof, set up in business for themselves. Aesthetics can only be a pure theory and a practical discipline, can only hope to justify its nurture by philosophy, once it has broken away from philosophy and thereby made possible the establishment of independent relations with it.

In the future, one important task of art is to learn how to make progress. If we look back over a long enough period, we can already discern some evidence of an advance. Art already has developed somewhat. The paintings of Valesquez and Cézanne, for instance, certainly mark an improvement over the cave drawings of southern France and Spain, although it must be admitted that some would deny this proposition. The progress is not in perfection of organization but rather in extent of material organized, in size of organization, but this is an improvement nevertheless. The cave artist did what he tried to do as successfully as the modern artist, but his efforts were not as ambitious. The bulls he drew approach a perfection of expression just as do the apples of Cézanne and the women of Valesquez, but they

do not express *as much*. The direction of artistic progress is toward the inclusion of more value while continuing to integrate equally well that value which is included. There is, it must be confessed, a feeling among the artists and art appreciators of today, that such notions as function, measurement and progress in art are modern notions taken over from physics, and that as such they are inimical to art. But the forces of nature are no less forceful for being known analytically. Control is a product of knowledge; and so it can be, too, in the world of art. The logic of art does not wish to substitute art theory for art. The advancement of aesthetics can lead to greater art, since it does not restrict by its analysis.

The great failure to achieve progress of any magnitude in art is evidenced by the continued inability of artists to learn very much from their predecessors. One generation of artists does manage to teach a little to those of the next. The use of fresh materials, like Duco, can be readily acquired, and so can new techniques, like perspective. But the lessons of aesthetic value must be painfully learned by each artist for himself. Artists do not yet understand how to build on one another's work, as scientists can; each still starts painfully from the beginning. This primitive practice, however, is not the fault of the artists but should be laid at the door of the aestheticians who have not yet worked out the principles of procedure. Contrary to current opinion, the use of the tools of reason does not preclude intuition, any more than it has ever done in scientific endeavor.

Artists some day will learn the meaning of progress. When they are able to avail themselves of mathematical formulation as well as of artistic intuition, the jump forward will be immense, and human life will acquire a new intensity hith-

erto undreamed. There is a suggestion of the future in Kant's association of aesthetic with the faculty of judgment, even though he did nullify the vision by resting it on subjective grounds. Human sensibility can advance no faster in acuity and extension than art makes possible. For the aim of art is to appreciate and increase the apprehension of aesthetic value, just as science seeks to understand and control the relations, of the actual universe, so that between the complementary endeavors of art and science, in Unamuno's phrase, the universe can be handed back to God in order.

Chapter II

THE ONTOLOGY OF ART

ONTOLOGY is the theory of being. A given ontology, so far as aesthetics is concerned, is a postulate-set with which empirical art practice must be consistent and from which it must be deducible. Ontology in particular is an hypothesis, the widest conceivable; in general it is the basic division of philosophy, since the field of being which it studies is the basic empirical field. The ontology of art, therefore, is the study of art considered in its broadest aspects as a specimen of being. The object of art is a natural object and as such has internal relations with its parts and external relations with other objects. All of these relations may be considered as logical and axiological conditions which are fixed and unchanging, or they may be examined as they undergo modifications in practice. Under the former the relations are the conditions of essence, defined as the power to affect or to be affected. Under the latter they are the conditions of existence, defined as that which affects or is affected. We contemplate the former and witness the latter; all that we know about essence is suggested by our experience with existence; but we could not understand existence

were it not for the light which is cast back on it by the theories of essence. In surveying actually existing works of art, we are confronted with the spectacle of traces of order almost obliterated by the prevailing confusion. It so happens that nothing in its historical adventures encounters order all the time, since existence consists so much of axiological elements in disorder. Hence the relations of art which an artist or an appreciator might meet would not come neatly packaged but in some confusion. It is not the task of the philosopher to aid and abet this confusion or even merely to describe it, but rather to analyze it into its logical and axiological elements so that these may be recognized and understood. But before the ontological aspects of art can be presented, a brief survey of the ontology in terms of which the interpretation is to be made will first have to be introduced.

The system of ontology here set forth may be described by the name of axiologic realism. It rests, as do so many philosophies, upon the ultimately irreducible yet ineradicable and contradictory notion of the infinite unity of value. An unending unity of all things under all categories must be the prime postulate, one which is necessary to the explanation of everything and yet by itself explains nothing. The most important of the elucidatory categories, therefore, is not this first category but rather that pair of categories which is the product of the first division of the one of infinite unity. Axiologic realism assumes that the nature of this infinite unity is that of value, the worth which one thing, anything, has for another, any other, felt by the infinite unity for the whole of its limitless self. With the breakup of this infinite unity, two universes immediately result. The first of these is the eternal universe of possibility; the second is the

temporal universe of actuality. The eternal universe of possibility contains all infinite possibilities of actuality, as to both its value content and its logical form. What is actual must have been possible, else it could not have become actual. Only, possibility contains perfection; and actuality, which always consists in a selection from among possibilities, contains limitations and imperfections which possibility does not contain. Thus, although actuality is part of possibility, each has an element which is native to itself and foreign to the other.

The eternal order of possibility has its being in a continuous hierarchy of value-logic, such that cut at any point, the direction upward in complexity and worth yields axiological elections, while the direction downward yields logical relations. In the eternal order there are no discrete objects, only the continuity of the possibility of objects, a possibility having its being in indivision. The temporal order of actuality has its existence in a discrete combination of the ordered elements of possibility (*i.e.*, value and logic) presented partly in confusion. Two things connected by logical form, then, may be said to have relations; two things connected by axiological content may be said to have elections. Thus all things have both logic-relations and value-elections. The eternal order is unchanging; but the temporal order is in continual flux, occasioned by the efforts of actual things to reach the place in the hierarchy of being which has been determined for them by the eternal order of possibility. Thus the path of actuality is a zigzag course, an historical dialectic, an affair partly of cause and partly of chance, always moving in search of the ideal and eternal order through the limitations of space and time. Each thing seeking its proper order changes and moves. But the disorder which exists provides

that things seeking order shall come into conflict with each other. Hence the destruction and the tendency toward disorder which characterizes actuality. Hence, also, actuality can reduce but cannot eliminate its dialectic course; it is a mixed affair of chaos and law, seeking always for the proper order but approaching it asymptotically.

One characteristic set of relations which are peculiar to the temporal order of actuality are the knowledge relations. The relation between subject and object, and between actual object and potential object, are peculiar to certain things at certain dates and places. Nothing ontological depends upon the knowledge relation but rather the reverse. All knowledge factors have their ontological status, but only some ontologies have their epistemological or knowledge status, namely, ontologies known. Thus the order of dependence is of epistemology on ontology, knowledge on being. In the knowledge relation there is true knowledge; things are known immediately and directly. What impinges on the awareness of a subject is what is known, but the subject has to some extent the ability to select the objects which shall impinge on his awareness. The awareness of objects depends to some extent on the perspective occupied by the subject. A knowledge of Greek is a perspective from which one is able to comprehend the meaning of the *Iliad* in the original. The perspective of knowledge, like all perspectives, is both permissive and restrictive; it is permissive in that it enables the individual to obtain a view of existence; but it is restrictive in that it insures that the view of existence shall be a partial view and therefore to some extent distorted. Thus the knowledge perspective of the individual is a perspective predicament. The individual seeks to widen his perspective and to escape to some extent from this predicament. For wider perspectives

do exist: the social perspective and the tensor perspective, to be understood on analogy with the way in which the tensor calculus is constructed: as an approach toward a total perspective. Appearance, illusion and hence the limited truths of which we have knowledge are dependent upon the knowledge relation and hence upon the perspective predicament. But truth itself is not. Truth is dependent upon the correspondence of propositions with reality.

Reality does not exist as a comparative term in ontology. The metaphysics of appearance and reality is one constructed upon the prior assumption of certain epistemological principles. Both universes, those of possibility and of actuality, are equally real and valuable, and only error can result from ascribing to either a reality or value superior to that of the other. The theory of the equal reality of the two universes successfully avoids the notion of a divine endowment of ignorance, in the case of all knowledge concerning the eternal universe; and the notion of the insuperable limitations of a man-made world, in the case of all knowledge concerning the temporal universe.

The two universes are joined by a third, termed the universe of destiny. Destiny is the direction of existence toward essence, of actuality toward possibility. Hence destiny is not quite a universe in the sense that the others are, but a tendency to a certain kind of movement. The formal inquiries, the established disciplines of study, such as the arts and the sciences and philosophy, are parts of the universe of destiny. But all three universes are involved. Let us consider the case of art. The artistic method belongs to the universe of destiny. The artist and his raw material, including the object on which he is working or from which he is taking off (such as a landscape, an individual's head), belong to the universe of

existence. The values which he seeks to actualize through his method and materials belong to the universe of essence.

The complete explanation of anything, then, must take into account its status in all three universes. The formal fields of inquiry are divided into two chief groups: the empirical fields and the speculative domains. Both groups have their relevancy to all three ontological universes.

The levels of empirical fields start with the most basic, the physical, and run, roughly, through the chemical, the biological, the psychological and the cultural (or social). Place in the levels is determined by increasing complexity and emergent qualities. The sciences of the same names study the empirical fields, according to a common method. Empirical fields can be exemplified by actual organizations: in the case of the physical, by physical things, such as stones; in the case of the chemical, by elements and inorganic compounds; in the case of the biological, by living organisms; in the case of the psychological, by minds and souls; and in the case of the social, by social groups and human cultures. Human cultures have the following subdivisions (among others): the ethical and the aesthetic.

The order of speculative domains starts with the lowest, the logical, and runs, roughly, through the mathematical, the ontological, the cosmological and the theological. Place in the order is determined by decreasing generality and emergent properties. The philosophical branches of the same name study the theoretical principles and systems of this domain according to a common method.

We have noted that empirical fields can be exemplified by actual organizations. Speculative domains can be exemplified only by theoretical systems. The theoretical systems have their place as exemplified in actual organizations, too, of

course, though in a somewhat more tenuous way: they can exist as forms in empirical organizations, or, symbolically, in recorded plans or minds. The speculative domains themselves have a status as empirical fields; being more structural and less contentual, they are ranged alongside them and have a non-specific relevancy to them.

Great care must be taken not to confuse the hierarchy of empirical fields with actuality or the order of speculative domains with possibility. Each hierarchy belongs to both universes. For instance, an empirical fact would be found exclusively in actuality, but there is always the *possibility* of empirical facts. Again, when such facts are generalized by science, it is because science is in search of causal principles or laws. A speculative principle, on the other hand, would be actually held as an hypothesis, but its validity can be finally established only by ascertaining it to be determined as an eternal condition of possibility.

The subdivisions of the empirical field of the cultural, namely the ethical and the aesthetic, are defined as follows. Ethics is the theory of the good, the qualitative aspect of the perfect relations between wholes. Aesthetics is the theory of the beautiful, the qualitative aspect of the perfect relations of parts to whole.

Since we shall be concerned here only with the relations of ontology to aesthetics, we may confine the remainder of our attention to the order of speculative domains. Logic is the theory of deductive systems. Mathematics is all deductive systems. Ontology is the theory of being. Cosmology is the theory of existence, the conditions and origins of the actual universe. Theology is the theory of essence, the holy, the qualitative aspect of the reflection of infinite value by a whole.

We are now in a position to go more into detail concerning the theory of aesthetics, which is our special concern in this chapter. How does the ontology of axiologic realism set forth above throw any special light on the ontology of art, or aesthetics? This problem may be treated in three broad divisions: we may consider (a) the ontological assumptions of the field of art, (b) the ontological aspects of its method, and lastly (c) the ontological implications of its conclusions in the art object. It must be remembered, however, that we are not to concern ourselves with assumptions, method and conclusions in *all* their facets but only with respect to their strict ontological aspects.

(a) The two fundamental questions of aesthetics are: what is beauty and what is art? The former question concerns aesthetics, which lies within the speculative domain as a subbranch of philosophy, the latter concerns a certain class of actual objects and hence lies within the empirical field as a subdivision of the social or cultural level. The first question will be discussed here, the second under section (c). We have already suggested an answer to the first in saying that the beautiful is the qualitative aspect of the perfect relation of parts to whole within a whole. 'Within a whole' here means, of course, 'in any actual organization.' Thus beauty is the value emanating from any actual organization when its parts approximate a perfect relation to the whole organization. This qualitative aspect which emanates from the beautiful object has been variously described as for instance a harmony (Plato), a deedless self-repose (Hegel), an effulgence or radiance (Aquinas), a clarity and a quality of repose (Ruskin), a quality of sublimity (Jordan)—all descriptions of a self-contained quality, which makes itself felt no matter how wild the work of art or tempestuous its subject-matter, for

even the wildest work of art has a unity and a self-sufficiency. Beauty, then, consists in the 'radiance of harmony,' that quality which emerges from the perfect relations of parts in a whole. That any object whose parts are sufficient and necessary for the whole and it for them needs nothing outside it and conveys that impression in the self-sufficiency which it succeeds in radiating.

The term, perfect, in this definition suggests that the beautiful is an ideal which can never be absolutely attained by any actual thing. It can only be approached or participated in by approximation, dialectically and asymptotically. Now, obviously, the more parts an actual whole has the greater are its chances for beauty. The perfect relation of two parts, in a whole containing only two parts, cannot hope to be as beautiful as the perfect relation of fifty parts in a whole containing that number; and it in turn cannot hope to be as beautiful as the perfect relation between parts and whole in a whole containing $n+1$ parts. The greater the number of parts the greater the complexity; and the greater the complexity, given an approach to the perfect relation of parts to whole, the greater the beauty.

The fact that the beautiful is an ideal, never to be attained absolutely by any actual thing but only shared, is explained by the ontological system of balance between the two universes. All actual organizations, or things, naturally exist in the temporal universe. But the archetypes of absolute beauty and of perfection have their being in the eternal universe. They are possibilities and hence attainable and worth striving for. But ultimately they remain outside the realm of striving, as ideal patterns or conditions, always possible and never exhausted by the participation of actuality in them. The ontological system of the two balanced universes provides

that superior reality or value shall not be the prerogative of either. Hence, while the eternal universe remains an attainable possibility, the temporal universe is not shorn of its reality or value; what is actually and hence temporarily beautiful is *as* beautiful (if not containing as much *of* beauty) as what is absolutely and hence eternally beautiful. The actually beautiful object is a fragment rather than a shadow of the eternal archetype of beauty. The neo-Platonic interpretation is here discarded, along with that of radical empiricism, in favor of one allowing for the real if incomplete participation of the actual in the ideal.

We have seen that the eternal universe of possibility is independent of the temporal universe of actuality so far as being is concerned, and dependent on it only for its manifestations. The temporal universe is utterly dependent upon the eternal and is in fact no more than a part of it in all respects but one, namely, in respect to the effects on each other of all things within its sphere. Manifestation is a phenomenon confined to the temporal universe. Thus there is a value to actuality which mere possibility does not possess, the value of actualization. All other things being equal, it is better for a thing to exist actually than for it merely to be possible. The making of a work of art is the attempt to satisfy the demand for this value in the realm of the axiological, and, in that realm, in the field of the beautiful in particular. Absolute beauty has being but it somehow ought also to exist. The making of works of art, which are events in the actual world, are efforts to increase the amount of beauty in actuality. Art, then, is the imitation of what beauty is possible and ought to become actual, or, more briefly, the imitation of what beauty ought to be. When we do something good or make something beautiful, we are imitating those

absolute and complete values which are eternal, and doing so partially, in our humble and momentary way. Nothing actual lasts forever, but in actuality we can share for a little while what does last forever.

The beautiful, as we have said, is the qualitative aspect of the perfect relation of parts to whole, and the ugly is the qualitative aspect of the imperfection, in deficiency or excess, of this perfect relation. When the parts are too little or too much for the whole, or the whole is too little or too much for the parts, then the result is a certain degree of ugliness. Ugliness is always present in any actual thing, since nothing actual is absolutely or completely beautiful. Ugliness, however, is no mere negative aspect of the beautiful and does not consist merely in the absence of beauty. It is the *qualitative aspect* of the privation of the beautiful and not just the privation by itself. The ugly is not a value but a disvalue. But disvalues are capable of having positive effects and of making themselves felt in actuality. The positive effect of the disvalue of the ugly is the fact of ugliness repellent in the world.

Ugliness is not an inhabitant of the eternal universe but belongs strictly to the temporal universe, since it is only in the temporal universe that objects exist as separate things and in division. Art touches the essence of being, but the existence of the ugly is a warning of limitations. The ugly exists as a minimal limit in everything—even in the work of art. As one contemporary artist has expressed it: "It is just as easy to commit suicide, esthetically speaking, by trying to embrace the whole world as it is by locking oneself up in an ivory tower." [8] The ugly is the violent and is marked with

[8] Ahron Ben-Shmuel, "Carving: A Sculptor's Creed" in the *Magazine of Art*, vol. 33 (1940), p. 508-9.

the scars of struggle since it tends actively to destroy; it is disturbing just as the beautiful, its opposite, is reposeful. To embrace the whole world would be to embrace everything; the ugly as well as the beautiful, the good and the holy, too. This, assuredly, the artist does not, and should not, do. He selects, if he does anything; for otherwise he is no artist. Art may forgive ugliness, it cannot embrace it, except in a transformed sense, the sense in which ugly objects may be used as models for beautiful works of art. Thus, ontologically, it is the task of the artist to work away from the ugly and toward the beautiful in order to escape from the confining limitations of actuality and toward the greater freedom and equilibrium of the eternal hierarchy of the possible universe.

(b) In the ontology of the two universes, it will be remembered, we began by postulating an infinite unity of value. The striving after the beautiful and the good means the striving after the infinite unity of value. For in the perfect relation of parts to whole, we are putting together the whole as it ought to be; and in our definition of the good as the qualitative aspect of the perfect relation between wholes outside the wholes, we are putting together all wholes as they ought to be. But to put together the parts of the whole within the whole and to put together also all wholes in the greatest whole would be to reassemble that infinite unity of value with the description of which our outline of the ontological scheme began. Hence to work toward the good or the beautiful is to work toward a cosmological unity with theological bearings. In this way we can see how aesthetics is related to ethics, cosmology and theology.

The mistake of supposing that the relations between aesthetics and epistemology holds the special key to the understanding of aesthetics is due chiefly to the efforts of Kant

to orient all philosophy about the knowledge relation. In aesthetics this movement has largely been felt in the equating of the aesthetic object with the faculty of judgment. But all things that are known are known, not just objects of art. Moreover, the centering of epistemology in philosophy reveals the implicit prior assumption of a particular ontology, that of nominalism, which is invalid. Aesthetic judgments are relevant to aesthetics, not judgments in general; and in aesthetic judgments, which are judgments made upon problems in the domain of aesthetics, the aesthetic elements determine the judgments and not the reverse. Epistemology, like psychology, has no essential relevancy to art or aesthetics; the epistemology of aesthetics [9] and the psychology of aesthetics [10] are special fields, but the being of aesthetics and of objects of art in no wise depends upon them.

Actuality is an effort toward eternal possibility, given an infinite run of the temporal universe, operating with divine insistence. Aesthetics is methodologically directed not only toward the eternal order of possibility and away from the temporal order of actuality but also toward the temporal order with eternal forms. The peculiarity of actuality is its dialectic path. The peculiarity of the ontological relation between actuality and aesthetics is the special dialectic of aesthetics. Now, the special dialectic of the aesthetic of beauty is established rhythm. Ordered motion as we have noted, is an imitation of the stable, and established rhythm is ordered motion imitating the ideal, static conditions of the eternal order.

Art objects are actual things, occurring in the historical order and subject to the special limiting conditions of exist-

[9] See Chapter II.
[10] See chapters VI and VII.

ence. But if they suffer the limitations of actual existence, they also enjoy its aim, even if they can do so only by participating in the dialectic. The established rhythms of works of art tend statistically toward the harmonic perfection of actuality. Hence, too, there operates a statistical tendency toward the true evaluation of works of art, a statistics which is made possible by means of large populations of appreciators and an endless series of art critics. Some aesthetic value may be lost irrevocably in the process of production-appreciation-evaluation, but the majority of art objects are given approximately their just deserts. Although in all probability some great works of art have been utterly forgotten and some exceedingly good ones neglected, most of the classics (as we learn to consider them) are recognized sooner or later to be such through the efforts of successive waves of generations of appreciators and critics.

The method of art, which, as we have seen, involves the imitation of ideal beauty in actual things, holds for all the arts, which thus operate between the two ontological universes, in indifference to whatever more specific demands particular arts may make. The use of canvas and oil pigments in polychrome easel painting, or of clay, plaster and bronze in sculpture, does not change the common factor of the ontological ground upon which all the arts rest.

Artists will not always agree as to their method, but this is an explicit affair which concerns differences of opinion among artists. Art itself, like science, does have an objective and implicit method which presupposes certain ontological principles willy-nilly; and this method serves to render it immune to the explicit false philosophies which its practitioners sometimes profess. The artist is a worker in one universe, the actual, who strives toward another, the possible, in

which he finds values which he endeavors to render actual. The possible values are suggested to him by the more limited value of actual things, the perfect pointed to by the imperfect. His observation of nature is calculated to guide him in his selection of ideals. For ideals are not all one and equally misty, vague and obscure; they are rather plans, guides, perfect structures and limits, and they differ among themselves with regard to their desirability as would the members of any hierarchy. There exist particular specific ideals and general ones. The ideal of beauty which the artist seeks when he works at a particular object of art is the general value of the beautiful as caught up in the specific structure of some perfectly possible thing in which all the limitations and shortcomings which exist in the similar actual thing which the artist studies for its suggestibility have been entirely eliminated. Thus the artist proceeds by analogical induction as well as by deduction, and all his inductions are accomplished on a deductive scale of values. For logical as well as axiological reasons, the method of art is inseparable from its ground in the ontology of art.

(c) The conclusion of the artistic process is the completed work of art. An actual work of art is an actual object lying within the empirical field of the social or cultural. The definition of art is as follows. Art is that division of culture which aims at the deliberate apprehension of beauty. The beauty of a work of art is not merely a value; it is a particular kind of higher value, a higher value which, like goodness, belongs specifically to the culture-level of the empirical fields. But this does not imply ontological dependence upon human appreciation, it means merely susceptibility to such appreciation. A work of art is thus a cultural or social object and must be treated and judged as such. That is to say its function

concerns more than one individual, usually social groups, and possibly approaches the whole of human society. The Ming vases, the Roman portrait busts, the paintings of Velasquez or of Rembrandt, the Buddhist temples, the Parthenon and the Gothic cathedrals, all are available to the artistic sensibilities of nearly everyone. The artist is a public figure and his products are public works whether the public takes cognizance of the fact or not. That is to say, the work of art may be composed of the crudest of materials: clay as well as jade, or canvas and pigments as well as gold, sounds made with special instruments; yet these are not used in their literal but in their formal or symbolic sense, and their meaning does not lie at the physical level although dependent on the physical elements of its material for expression. A concrete aesthetic object—a work of art—always has something abstract about it, and this is far more true of it than of other types of concrete objects, chiefly because of its symbolic nature.

The work of art itself is a particular kind of sign, standing by itself and capable without aid of conveying its own meaning. It is the kind of sign which is called a symbol, pointing forever to the value of the beautiful. The ultimate aim of all art is to discover a symbol for the widest possible value, for the universally valuable.

The method of art, which consists in relating the two ontological universes in a certain manner, has its ontological aspects; and the symbolism of art, being fundamentally an ontological affair, has its methodological aspects. But these issue only from the conclusion of the process, the completed work of art. Let us consider the conclusion from another point of view, the ontological. The object of art may be considered as a center of communication, the core, so to speak, of symbolism, a symbolism by means of which certain

values are conveyed from the discoverer (the artist) to the potential appreciator, the appreciator who is capable of standing in the proper perspective. In this sense the work of art is an axioform, intended to convey rather than merely to contain the aesthetic value of beauty. The aesthetic form is both symbolic and fixed, pointing always toward the aesthetic values in process—but doing so after a static fashion.

A work of art is successful to the extent to which it reaches toward this goal. None attains it, but all approach it more or less closely. The work of art like the law of science is an actual affair, but it differs from most other actuals in that its chief business is to point beyond actuality. It is thus an axiological symbol of the eternal standing in the temporal. Everything in its duration in a way symbolizes the eternal, whereas everything in its transience exemplifies the temporal. But the work of art, in its statistical tendency toward extensity of duration, is a more suitable symbol of the eternal, since it indicates the potentiality of the escape from transience.

One by-product of the conclusion of the artistic process is the practice of art appreciation. Of course, in a work of art new values of the beautiful are made actual. The appreciator derives pleasure from his experience of apprehending the meaning and the full effect of a work of art. Thus to understand a work of art means to love some new corner of the world. Art is in one sense an expression of tenderness for everything strange, and so it calls forth in the appreciator a new effort at loving. The question of the use of a work of art, then, is one of the enjoyment of its beauty. To enjoy a work of art fully is to use it to the fullest. The utilitarian function of the object of art, such as the use of a beautiful house as a dwelling, is extraneous to its use as a fine art object.

It may be finally pointed out that while all striving in actuality and the careers of all actual objects represent some degree of the effort to actualize values which are to that point only possibilities, the phenomenon of art is the manifestation of a higher value which appears in no other form. It is thus a matter of particular ontological concern, reminding all who touch upon it that there is no compromise. Art unites the crudest of materials with the highest of aims; the artist of today has made no advance over the cave men in this respect, for, like them, he is still fascinated by the problem and obsessed with the process of making an ontological image of god out of the commonest clay.

Chapter III

THE FIVE FUNCTIONS OF ART

THE craving for explanation, so common to human beings in every one of their activities, is usually baffled by the phenomenon of art. We have learned to expect that art will be described to us by those who are its authorities in terms which are at once ineffable and mysterious. We shall always be told that art is something extreme, that on the one hand it is absolutely intuitive and awesome, fit only for the elect and hypersensitive; or that, on the other, it is nothing more nor less than a social product and tool, produced by the masses for the masses. The assumption in each case is that a metaphysical explanation is being given, in the sense that the accounting always depends upon a theory of reality which is ultimate and ontological. The tracing of art to human intuition, for example, makes it ontologically dependent upon the human senses, or on some one human sense, often devised for the occasion, and thus upon an anterior theory of reality which holds that true being resides in sense experience, from which all else is either derivative or of secondary reality. The tracing of art to mass expression makes it ontologically dependent upon human

society; upon some one social institution, such as economy; or upon a single social class; and, in any of these cases, upon an anterior theory of reality which holds that true being resides in the materially productive functions of social groups, from which all else is either derived or of a secondary reality. Here it is obvious that the metaphysical theory of nominalism, the theory of the sole reality of physical particulars, is responsible for these aesthetic assumptions.

We may for the present purposes beg the eligibility and validity of nominalism as a metaphysical foundation for aesthetics, and we may instead simply ask why it is that the explanations of art which nominalistically fostered theories advance, are unable to account for the other aspects of art. The intuition theory is not able successfully to account for the social nature of art, and the social theory is not able to account either for the individualistic nature of discovery and appreciation or for the fact that the value of works of art survives the social context in which they were actualized. Somehow in these conceptions, art proves to be a static affair even when it is conceived as having been a product of the clash of violent forces. Although there are other art theories which have not been included here, our pair of examples should serve to illustrate the kind of error which is commonly committed in the explanation of art. Art is stillborn, whatever its parentage; it is held to be ultimately baffling or else amazingly clear. In every case a single function is assumed for it, and this function is expected to furnish all the explanation which is necessary or even possible. Now, there is one grain of truth in these contentions, and this is that art must have a dominant function if it has any; that is to say, one of its functions must prevail over the others. The shortcoming in most present-day explanations of art is not that they assume

a function but that in so doing they rule out the possibility of others. However, the truth that one function is dominant over the others must not be allowed to obscure the fact that art has more than one function. The functions of art would not make intelligible sense were they to be construed as a heterogeneous collection. But on any other assumption, the metaphysics of nominalism must prove an inadequate theory. The inconsistency of the nominalistic philosophies is as unfortunate for aesthetics as for any other field which nominalism seeks to invade with its simplified yet misleading explanations. Nominalism does not admit any organization or system in its account; anything less must prove inelegant and unsatisfactory.

Since the purpose of this chapter is to set forth the functions of art and their interrelations, a positive and affirmative rather than a negative and derogatory purpose, we must leave the full criticism of theories of art for another place, and proceed with the task which we have set ourselves.

The thesis advanced here is that art has five principal functions which arrange themselves in a series of precedence according to their metaphysical importance. These five functions are: (1) the ontological, (2) the logical, (3) the epistemological, (4) the psychological, and (5) the social. Our first task will be to explain each of these functions in turn, and our second to show their interrelations.

(1) The ontological function of art is that of the allowance function in general, applied to beautiful objects. A work of art has a being of its own, a being which consists in the harmony or qualitative aspect of the perfect relations of parts to whole; and if an object is a work of art, nothing—not the failure to recognize it for what it is, nor the failure to appreciate its value, nor the failure to use it as a work of art—

literally nothing at all—can destroy that being. Everything, as Bacon said, is what it is and not another thing. Being is immutable, and the destruction of anything actual only returns it to the sole status of possibility; it does not obliterate it from being. What is true of all being is no less true of the being of a work of art. Existence, or the condition of actuality, is an unstable and at best a temporary state; things exist only for a while and nothing actual is known which lasts forever. But existence is only a part, and not the largest part, of being. In the largest state of being, the condition of possibility, there is no coming into being and no passing away, for the reason that existence detracts nothing from being. A possible work of art of course cannot function as a work of art, whereas an actual work of art can: existence has a value of its own. Nevertheless, the fact remains that being is an inalienable characteristic of all things.

Now, that part of being which is existence allows for function, and that allowance, so far as being itself is concerned, we may say *is* its function. The ontological function is the allowance function, the function which allows other functions. Existence is a mode of being, and function is an exclusive property of existence; wherefore the ontological function of existing things is to allow them to function in whatever way the circumstances and their own peculiar natures require and permit. The peculiar nature of works of art is their harmony. Therefore works of art may function in whatever way harmony requires and permits them to function. The ways in which harmony does require and permit them are given in the four remaining functions of art described below. These are, we may say, the functions of beauty or harmony, and they are allowed by the ontological function.

We have said that the peculiar nature of art is its harmony or beauty, contained in the perfect relations of parts to whole. We shall be concerned with the logical aspects of harmony when we come to consider the logical function of art. But logic, as has been generally admitted, is analytical, and we may ask here just what, in the case of works of art, it is analytical *of*. What, in other words, is the value, of which the logical function of art is the analysis, which allows the other functions of the work of art? The value of art is the symbolic qualitative reference to the ideal harmony of which all actual harmony is but the exemplification. The nature of art is the nature of that value which can best represent, qualitatively and symbolically, the radiance of harmony. Just as some of the logical elements of the actual world are represented in cognition, so some of the elements of value are apprehended in feeling. What is felt is value in the world, and what is felt in the work of art is of course its value. This is what we know as the beauty of a work of art. In all organizations there is some relation of the parts to the whole, else the organization would become disorganized. What makes the work of art differ from all other actual organizations is its peculiar ability to refer symbolically and qualitatively to the perfect relations of parts to whole which is ideal harmony. Works of art symbolize absolute beauty, which is the total beauty of the whole universe of essence. The harmony of parts in a whole when that whole is a work of art points to (as well as partakes of) that harmony which is the perfect harmony of *all* parts in The Whole. Thus in the last analysis, the work of art is a symbol of the absolute perfection, the infinite unity, of all being.

What is true of works of art must be true in every instance and for every art. Let us, in this case, mention only the art

of music. In no other art, with the possible exception of architecture, is the unity of tremendous value with elaborate logical structure so evident as it is in music. The structure builds up to the value; the value analyzes down to the structure. The way in which the flesh of the values of sound enclose the bones of its structure illustrates very well the unity in actuality of certain values and their logic. The vast possibilities of music have hardly been even envisaged. The music of Bach, Handel and Scarlatti, for instance, shows how feasible it is for the scope of value to be consistent with the strictest of logical forms. The relations of musical sounds, of rhythm, melody, harmony and tone, would not exist as such were it not for works of art in the field of music. Thus without works of art certain specific functions would have no relevance to being. The new freedoms in music, as represented by atonal harmonies, polyrhythms, and so forth, will no doubt find their conventional genius, their Bach, in time. The possibilities of music are fantastic in their ever-increasing scope and range of allowances.

(2) The logical function of art is marked by the identity and difference of the harmony of parts within the whole. When a thing is beautiful, its beauty relates it to some extent with other things and marks it apart from still others. In this way what it essentially is, concerns logic as well as ontology. Its being is ontological but the definition of that being, a definition which follows of necessity, is logical. Thus so far as art is concerned there is no great distinction between ontology and logic, so close are their functions. Both ontology and logic, for instance, are greatly concerned with the perfect relations of parts to whole in an object, the attainment of which is its supreme aesthetic function; but ontology is more concerned with the value, the essence, of that function, than

is logic. And, conversely, logic is more concerned with the structural or analytical aspects, than is ontology.

To the extent to which the perfect relating of parts to whole is approximated, the result is an organization. Now, organization is a logical affair; and an actual organization, such as a work of art, is an exemplification of logic. Thus the organization of art is the logical function of art. Another name for organization is form or order. Form, or order, is supported, also, by the relations of identity and difference, so that the term, organization, embraces both meanings of logic as employed here. But in general, we may distinguish somewhat between the two meanings of logic in actual organization, for there we generally find the two elements of identity and difference on the one hand and of organization presented as quantity and structure on the other. We wish to know of an actual organization, say an object of art, how much it is the same as another thing and to what extent it differs. The logic which, as we have seen, is represented in two of its phases in works of art is also presupposed in mathematics, which should not surprise those who are familiar with the logistic theory of mathematics which holds it to be an extension of logic. When Plato said that beauty and mathematics are close, he did not wish to limit either to the other. For, obviously, there are aspects of the beautiful which are not in themselves mathematical, the qualitative aspects, for instance; and there are aspects of mathematics which are not in themselves beautiful, the merely analytical, for instance. Thus Plato did not mean that the beautiful could be reduced to its elements of analysis, which is what the practicing artist always seems to fear that he meant, because it is so often what he thinks aesthetics and the philosophy of art mean today. No; Plato meant that what can be analyzed mathe-

matically into complex elements of analysis is *ipso facto* beautiful and can be appreciated as such. Works of art have forms, but, as we have noted in an earlier chapter, these are forms in a very special way: that is to say, they are *axioforms.* Like all logical problems, the emphasis is finally on value. Axiological problems are part of ontology, so that finally the logical shows its dependence upon the ontological.

Some modern illustrations taken from art theory and practice throw interesting light upon the abstract presentation of the logical theory of art. The modern American school of architecture of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright is based upon the elevation of the logical function of art to the position of first importance, thus placing it above the ontological. Form follows function, say these architects, meaning that the use to which a structure is to be put determines the form it shall take. There is little doubt that the architecture developed from this notion is far better than that which it came to replace. The structures to which decorations have been superfluously added, the homes and business houses of the late nineteenth-century American architecture, are well replaced. Yet to allow form to follow function absolutely is to insist upon the logical function of art as its only one, which, as we have seen and shall see further, is far from being the case. Did form follow function absolutely in Saracenic architecture, in Byzantine architecture, in Renaissance? Architecture, like all other arts, must eventually be obedient to its ontological functions, its theory of what is real and valuable, from which its logical function flows and with which it must fit. The expression of the nature of being is sought in the arts no less than in other forms of expression that human beings foster, and architecture is no less susceptible to its own ontological function than are—say—the sci-

ences. But when an outmoded, a no longer believed-in, type of construction remains, the logical function is an excellent canon with which to clear it away, and incidentally also one which produces clean and unblemished forms of building.

From an example of the so-called 'spatial arts' we may turn to take one from the 'temporal arts.' In music, the bare bones of form protrude rather obviously, and as a consequence the logical function suggests itself as the dominant one. The rhythms of sound are the evidence of order in the auditory world. This order is what keeps mere succession from turning into chaos. The fact that a sound which has occurred can be repeated, albeit with some variation, gives evidence that reason is fundamental. The Englishman in the tropics who dresses for dinner when alone, does so out of respect for the necessity and importance of order. We lean on order as presented by the established rhythms of sound—so that we do not become utterly lost in time in a chaos of noise. Rhythm retains for us, or restores to us, our place in actuality. One day is so much like another, at least in outward and purely physical manifestations, that we would go mad in the chaos and meaninglessness unless we could mark one day off from another in some way or fashion: by feast days and holidays, birthdays and mourning days, and so on. We eat at regular times whether we are hungry or not, we sleep and perform ceremonies of one kind or another at stated intervals whether we are ready for them or not, simply because we lean on rhythm and periodicity, and need these for our sanity. But these are not merely logical; in a deeper sense they are ontological.

The strength of music, then, is that it reveals an ontological faith in logical order. The type of music makes no difference. Consider jazz, for instance. Jazz, or swing, or any

other form of syncopation, is a reliance upon the limits of order. It poses the question, how far can we abandon the rigid order that we have established without crossing the border into predominant disorder? That is why jazz has something of abandon, or, as we say, of licentiousness, about it. It tempts disorder by varying order, and thus recalls us to the ontological nature of order. The effort to depart from order in music is always illustrative, because the departure underlines the order. If form follows function absolutely, if the dominant function of art is its logical function, then, logically, we ought to be able to go along with it wherever it leads us so long as its development remains logical. This is precisely what Schoenberg tried implicitly to show. He went from the ordinary conception of music to the cultivation of atonalism. Then he returned from atonalism not to the eight-tone scale but to the twelve-tone scale, and fled from atonality to polytonal harmonies! The insistence of order in music is dictated by its ontological function, though this is not apparent chiefly because in its abstraction music appears to be entirely a matter of logic.

(3) The epistemological function of art is the increase of knowledge by means of the presentation, through the senses and to awareness, of values which would not otherwise have been perceived. This is obviously not the only way in which knowledge can be increased, but it may be the most important way in which *this kind* of knowledge can be increased. Science adds to the sum of our knowledge of the systems of natural law, whereby we are enabled to bring values into play, but this is quite another thing from recognizing and apprehending these values as such. Art discovers values which were not before fully actualized, and which are expressed abundantly for the first time only in the work of art. It

thus presents fresh values to human apprehension (or any other hypothetical variety of apprehension), making possible the increase of the knowledge of values. In this way, art fulfills an epistemological function.

That the epistemological function is subordinate to but consistent with the ontological function, should be clear to any student of philosophy who understands the nature of the relation of epistemology to ontology. More things have being than are known, and all things that are known have being. This means that all things which have being, *i.e.*, all things, have ontological relations, while only those things which are known, *i.e.*, some things, have epistemological relations. Epistemology draws a smaller circle within the far wider circle of ontology, and so, as we should expect, the epistemological function of art is a subordinate function. The epistemological function also depends upon the logical. The increase of the awareness of values would not be possible without the existence of identities and differences in the harmony of parts within the whole. We could not recognize without differences, nor apprehend without identities. Knowledge is the knowledge of difference: we know by means of comparison. And the apprehension of value depends upon its ability to be what it is. Thus the epistemological function also is a subordinate one with respect to the logical.

Subordination does not mean invalidity; the epistemological function is a perfectly valid one. It so happens that the only class of beings whose members are able to appreciate the value of works of art is, at the present time, the class of human beings. This makes the epistemological function of art one of great importance indeed to human beings. Three functions of art are in their appreciation closely interwoven with human beings: the epistemological, the psychological

and the social. We shall consider these in this and the following two divisions of function. Yet especially in connection with the epistemological function is it essential to remember that human responses are perforce always made to elements which already exist in the world. We do not create what we recognize, apprehend or appreciate in the act of recognition, apprehension or appreciation. It is perhaps true that art would never have existed were it not for the activity of human beings, but its existence once having been brought about no longer depends upon human beings. That is to say, art has its subjective aspect, and its effect psychologically is felt without doubt; but it no longer depends upon the subject and its existence is in no wise subjective. It is simply a new item of value the knowledge of which has been made available through appropriate apprehensions.

We may illustrate the foregoing by calling attention to the distinction between the roles of creator (or, better, inventor) and appreciator in the art of sculpture. The artist does not make a work of art out of any substance which inheres in his own spirit; he makes it out of the material of the external world, in accordance with the possibilites which he has envisaged as existing in that world. The result is a combination of form with material which is no longer dependent upon the sculptor. He sees, let us say, the possibilities in the stone, and the uncarved block is to him simply an opportunity to make actual what is only potential. He must make those potentialities actual. Then as an artist he is done with that particular object of art. He draws back and regards the product of his handiwork not any longer in his capacity as an artist but now only as an appreciator and perhaps as a critic whose ability to appreciate and to criticize must stand on their own grounds, irrespective of the inventive or

creative capacity of the same person. The work of art now exists and is to be known, and the man who is responsible for its existence must henceforth remain in the same detached relation to it as any other person whose perspective enables him to be attracted by it. Jacob Epstein, the Anglo-American sculptor, once said in reply to the inquiry of an observer that he was no more of an authoritative judge than was anyone else of the particular meaning of a head he had lately modeled. The epistemological function is general and available to all who are capable of standing in the perspective of the appreciator. To those who are so capable there is an awareness of new values existing in the world, and of actuality to be enriched to the extent to which the new values can be known.

(4) The psychological function of art is the increase of experience by the bringing, through the senses and to awareness, of values which would not otherwise have been appreciated. Two things are immediately evident with respect to the psychological function of art. One is that the psychological function is closely related to the epistemological. The other is that the independence of art holds for the psychological function just as well as it does for the epistemological. While human beings are at present the only beings whose psyches are capable of being enriched by works of art, this does not in any way make art a psychological affair or the psychological function of art its dominant one. In epistemology we consider the knowledge relation at its objective end; in psychology we consider the knowledge relation at its subjective end. We are concerned with the effect of knowledge upon the psychological subject, or, in other words, upon the psyche of the knowing and feeling subject. Thus epistemology, which is concerned with the knowledge of the

object by the subject, has as its subdivision the study of the effect upon the subject of the knowledge of the object. This applies at present in connection with works of art only to the human being as subject, but hypothetically it could apply to any subject whose perspective enabled it to stand in the knowledge relation of appreciation to objects of art.

We have seen that the epistemological function of art is an important one, yet that it is subordinate to the ontological function; and likewise that the psychological is a subdivision of the epistemological. Thus we can arrive at the valid conclusion that the psychological function, too, is subordinate to the ontological function. The same will be true of the relation of the psychological to the logical. The organic human being in whom there exists a psyche or organization is an existent being, having an ontological status of its own. The psychological function, such as the experience of the values of works of art, is an existent function and depends upon its own ontological being. The psychological being is also dependent upon the logical for the identity and difference involved in the harmony of parts within the whole which enable the senses to apprehend values which are peculiarly artistic, as distinguished from other values and as distinguished from other existents with which the artistic values may happen to be contemporaneous and contiguous.

Psychologically, the appreciation of works of art increases the sensibilities of the psyche. The various arts enrich the width of range and the keenness of appreciation of the senses by which they are apprehended. Music increases the powers and experience of the sense of hearing, painting and sculpture of the sense of sight, architecture and sculpture of the sense of touch, and so on. Since there are no arts that do not serve some sense while at the same time there are some senses

which are not at present served by some art, we may presume that new arts for the service of unserved senses remain to be discovered. Such an expectation appears to be reasonable enough. The emphasis of culture for a long while has been placed upon the visual and the auditory. A more advanced cultural stage might witness the cultivation of the other senses; the olfactory, for instance. We might develop methods of producing works of art which would depend for their appreciation upon the sense of smell or even upon the sense of taste. It is conceivable that there may be a tactile art or even a baresthetic or kinesthetic art, arts of touch or pressure or movement. Thus far these senses have been held down to the most primitive requirements, namely those of feeding and breeding, at least so far as direct employment is concerned; but it is conceivable that they, like the others, could lend themselves to the service of the inquiry into the nature of ontological values.

We may discern the operation of the psychological function of art most plainly in the spectacle of the difficulties encountered by advocates of new movements in art. Habit bears strongly upon the operation of the senses, so that from certain familiar phenomena we expect to have certain reactions. Experiences which do not conform to expectations occasion considerable shock, and all fresh developments in art are of this character. The spectator goes to an art gallery in the hope of enjoying, let us say, either Corot or something similar which experiences with Corots have prepared him for, and instead he sees Cézanne; or, *mutatis mutandis*, he expects Cézanne and sees Picasso. The listener goes to a concert hall looking forward, let us say, to Beethoven or something very much like Beethoven, and instead he hears Stravinsky; or he expects Stravinsky and hears Ives. He claims at first to see

meaningless shapes and to hear meaningless sounds. Some time is usually required for the social group to absorb the shock brought about by the novelty of the psychological experience, but after the period of absorption (and provided, of course, that the art concerned is great art), the public recognition which ensues means that habit has begun to operate and indeed has managed to include the new art, so that the experience of the psychological person expects and indeed finds in the new art the experience it has always found so easily in the works of the old 'revolutionary' artists. The psychological function of art involves the education of the senses to the appreciation of new ontological values as these come into existence in the world.

(5) The social function of art is the expression of the myths of institutions in various appropriate media. Each of the institutions of human cultural organization has its implicit dominant ontology, its inarticulated postulates regarding reality, which it expresses, symbolically and qualitatively, in the form of myths. The myth of the leading institution of the social group is the one which dictates the ethos of the culture. Art generally serves as its means of communication. The myth of the leading institution is also the carrier of the philosophy of the culture, that theory of reality which the social group has accepted. Thus the art of a culture, in so far as that art is expressive of the myth of the leading institution, is also the carrier of the theory of the real in the culture, and hence depends upon ontology. Thus the social function of art is subordinate to the ontological function, as indeed to all the others. The social function is dependent upon the logical in that the service of institutions relies upon the identity and differences in the harmony of the parts of the myth to the myth as a whole. The social is dependent

upon the epistemological in that on[illegible] those values standing in the knowledge relation can be [illegible]ident [illegible]air[illegible]ectly into the service of institutions. The [illegible]s[illegible] prese[illegible]t[illegible]i[illegible]ependent upon the psychological in that myths as a defin[illegible]e senses of the human individuals who are parts value w[illegible]t [illegible]holes of social groups. Without the hierarchy of of the [illegible] the social itself could not function. der of the cha[illegible]

The services rendered by art [illegible]g and implicat[illegible]itution of a culture makes it appear that a[illegible] [illegible]air, an enterprise with no status of its own[illegible] [illegible] seen that this is not the case. Socially speaking, art, too, has the status of an institution, but it is an institution with a special function to perform, and that function gets performed regardless of other institutions. The leading institution of a culture may decline and some other institution may take its place, but no serious alteration in the function of art is thereby involved. The new institution is treated exactly like its predecessor. Art serves the carrier of the theory of the real, the institution whose myth dominates the culture, regardless of what institution occupies that office, just as a soldier gives the military salute to any officer above him in rank regardless of what that person may be.

Of course, it should be understood that art serves other institutions besides the leading one. Its chief service is to the leading institution, but it serves others in a declining series of importance. There is, in fact, no institution within human culture which is as such ruled out from being served by the social function of art. But when we remember that art has a social function we must also bear in mind that its social function in no way precludes its other functions. A work of art intended for the service of some institution may itself have other functions which it fills at the same time: functions

which are ontological, epistemological, and so forth. The social function required is not always apparent in it. We may suppose that it is brought by chance while it fills another, or we may consider one after the purpose to be the only or the chief purpose, whereas it is the art of many others.

The service which art has rendered to religion is well known. In fact, art indeed has many times, when the church was the leading institution, as in the experience of the Middle Ages of central Europe, art served the churches in the new art building of the churches themselves, in their beauty in the works in their ritual, the social function of many arts was called forth to good advantage. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music were among the arts which assisted in the performance of the religious service; in the Gothic cathedrals, in the paintings of Giotto, and in the music of Bach, we have evidence that the union was a fruitful one for art as well as for religion. Of course, other arts have served religion, and art has served other institutions. The great religious art of the Jews was literature, as exemplified in the epic of the Old Testament. The arts have served the state, science, education, etc. But the particular institution which is the leading one, and the arts in its service, are highly indicative of the stage of the culture.

Art now as ever is the gauge of culture. Although art always manages to be somewhat better than the conditions with which it is surrounded, so that a declining culture may nevertheless give rise to great works of art, the fact remains that art itself is a good indicator of what is going on. From a declining culture we expect a degenerate art; but degenerate art is nevertheless art, while degenerate culture is only culture to the extent to which it has not degenerated. The degenerate arts of today, although splendid in their decay, are yet in their decay. The attitude contained in the poetry of Robinson Jeffers, his hatred for all social organization and

even civilization, and his search for solace and nobility in the thought of virgins and stones; sur[illegible]dent painting, its abrogation of all reason yet inadvertent presentation of necessity in the very act of abrogation—these are definitions of a declining age. Yet it may be that we shall value what so, a joyful rebirth. Culture does not stop; it re[illegible] of the [illegible]elf in the very act of dying. And so it may be, under the cha continuous and unending in its social functioning and implicat[illegible]

We have reached the end of ou[illegible] of the five functions of art. To those who wo[illegible] simple explanation of art, the postulation of more than one function appears to be a confusion. To those to whom art is the most complex affair on earth, ineffable and mysterious, the description of an exact number of precise and definable functions appears to be an oversimplification. Art, however, is both simple and complex, commonplace and mysterious. It is simple in fulfilling a single function at a given time yet complex in the interlocking of its functions; commonplace in that there seems to be no human culture which altogether lacks it, yet mysterious in being, like all values, ultimately unanalyzable. We can never describe more than the logical aspect of a value; to apprehend it requires immediate experience. The everyday fact of art, like that of the sounds and the primary colors, is yet a mysterious phenomenon, as baffling to the artist as to anyone else. The functions which art performs are arranged in a hierarchy, as we have noted; they are dependent upon the ontological function, and upon each other in the hierarchy. Yet there is also a sense in which each is independent. Those who would advocate one function as real and the others as subordinate, where the function chosen for eminence is not the ontological, have to explain the importance of the neglected functions. Only those things which are at least partly independent can be properly related.

The advocates of the pure art theory hold art to be cheapened by its social f[illegible]ured while the advocates of the theory that art is an exp[illegible]out by [illegible]f the masses insist that to regard art as having an[illegible]ter the p[illegible]nd value in itself is to make the error of preciosit[illegible]e art c[illegible]lity. But each function is what it is and as such [illegible]ch ensues [illegible]other. The value of recognizing that the ont[illegible]ndeed has ma[illegible]t of art is the primary one is that the other [illegible]perience of the robbed of their dignity and importanc[illegible]nds in the new art had none but an ontological function, th[illegible] in the works [illegible] be the poorer and we should know nothing of the being of art. If, on the other hand, art had no ontological function (which would be, of course, absurd), there would be nothing to accord to the other functions their proper reality. The very fact that art is a value, which none deny despite the variation in theories of value, means that it has a valid place in the world, and that the loss occasioned by its departure from actuality would involve a serious deprivation. The presence of art among us is a witness to its manifold services, ranging all the way from the affirmation of pure being to the social role of institutions, none the less real for not being so obvious and none the less important for being so ordinary. The nature of the universe in which we place our faith, and the culture of the social group in which we conduct our lives, are bound up for us in the five functions of art. To concentrate upon one of these in no wise calls for the exclusion or derogation of the others.

The hierarchy or graded series of artistic functions would seem to require that each be ontologically dependent upon those below it, but this is not so. The series of dependencies of the functions is itself functional rather than ontological; that is to say, it is a matter of use rather than being. The social function of art cannot be performed without the

others, but it does not follow from this that its being requires the others. Each function is independent with respect to its being, and dependent only with res prese its use or applica-tion. Without psychological persons a defin stance, it is doubt-ful whether the service that art value w to religion could have ever occurred; but the soc of the a. of art has an ontological status of its own: it *is* der of the cha of the myth of the leading institution, and in ti g and implicati dependent of all psychological considerations. istice to the functions of art unless we consider... ...l merits as well as in relation to the others. In considering art as a whole, we must bear in mind the graded series of five functions whereby art is woven into the fabric of existence.

We may bring this chapter to a close by noting that while nominalism fails to be an adequate foundation for aesthetic theory, its contradictory number, the theory of metaphysical realism, seems to do much better. Realism in this sense refers to the theory that all things are equally real (though all may not be equally valuable). The functions of art are real functions, and the domain of real universals and values includes the ontological function of art; when we assert that the other artistic functions are subordinate to the ontological function, we are endeavoring to show the hierarchy of existential functions rather than to pass judgment upon differing degrees of reality, which, on the showing of metaphysical realism, simply are not to be found. Explanation can finally be satisfied only with propositions describing conditions that do not change and that are not altered by the passage of time. The functions of art must be shown to answer to this description, and this has been attempted from a basis which incontrovertible fact and the theory of realism make solid.

Chapter IV

THE MEANING OF TRAGEDY

ALL art has its tragic aspect, but then so has every ordinary event; hence we are bound to seek for art a more definitive knowledge concerning the nature of the tragic. We experience tragedy in our personal lives and we witness tragedies on the stage; but do we mean the same thing when we speak about the tragedies of ordinary life and the tragedies represented in works of art? If so, what is the element they have in common? Through the answers to these questions the essential meaning of tragedy may be found. We are safe in assuming, for the purposes of this chapter, that some experience of the tragic in both its occurrences: as an element of art and also of ordinary life, is familiar to all persons. Yet the meaning of a thing, that which is essential to it, is not always to be found in the common-sense definition, for common sense is apt to be too general; or in the artistic definition, for art is apt to be too special. We are here making the assumption (for which, as we shall learn, there are good metaphysical reasons) that the two meanings of tragedy as given in ordinary life and in art are special cases of a grander principle.

With the understanding of this assumption, we may proceed abruptly to the statement of the hypothesis which is to be accepted as the basis of the present argument. The hypothesis, which is in the form of a definition, is as follows: Tragedy is that aspect of artistic value which is concerned with the qualitative presentation of the acceptance of the content of actuality. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to exploring the meaning and implication of this definition.

By tragedy is meant the qualitative reaction to limited value, taken just for its value and despite its limitations. Tragedy depends upon the fact that values as actual affairs cannot persist forever, for it does not matter that values are fated so long as they *are* values. What is, is, when it is; and this irrespective of how long it may or may not remain what it is. Every actual thing is both valuable and logical. Its value has disvalue; its logic has contradictions. Thus it is doomed; and indeed history is the record of doomed things. Everything must come to an end in finite time; all individuals, families, empires and whole civilizations, however long their span of time, they must know defeat and eventual death and decay. We argue from a knowledge of the past to the expectation of the future; that is the reasonable thing to do. But value always transcends logic, and love, being a manifestation of value, reaches beyond reason: we love the things we have and we do not wish them to die. We know that they shall die; yet we love them, all the same, and we are willing to fight for them. It is a hopeless fight, and we shall undoubtedly lose them in an end which may be near or distant. But we fight for what we love, doggedly, blindly, against all adversaries, though we may know in a way, or feel, that we are certain to go down in defeat.

Tragedy is self-contained and self-sufficient; it calls for nothing else and requires nothing more. Tragedy is chiefly a qualitative affair; it presents itself as force, value or power, rather than as principle, law or analysis. It acts as a whole and not through the agency of its parts. Lastly, it is the content of existence, the positive part of actuality which we meet in our experience, that tragedy qualitatively accepts. In tragedy, the conflicts, the logic and the structure of existence are there only to point up the bafflement, and hence the limitations, of positive value. Nothing actual exists forever; everything eventually runs into conflicts and contradictions and hence must perish. The perishing comes as an indication that value is not unlimited, and because it is not unlimited it must come to an end. Tragedy is the recognition of the fact that even limited value (and all actual value is limited value) is *value* just as much as unlimited value would be, only it is not as much *of* value. The tragedy is that no values less than infinite value are allowed to remain actual more than a limited time.

Actuality in the round is neither as good nor as bad as it is sometimes painted. Actuality is the world of action and reaction, the realm of those things which affect and are affected; and in this world there is harmony as well as conflict, logic as well as irrationality. Tragedy concentrates upon the consistent elements. Value has its structure; and since we are concerned with positive value in tragedy, we are also concerned with the extent to which that structure is valid, even though this part of our concern is indirect. Thus tragedy requires for its values a certain degree of consistency. The requisite consistency is furnished in actuality by the remorseless logic of events. In a limited time, the logic of events cannot be demonstrated, and that is why tragedy in art so often

hangs upon a protracted time-span. The *Oresteia* of Aeschylus pursues its postulates through several generations with the aid of a dramatic trilogy, and in this wise the logic of events makes itself evident; for it is always possible that the postulates of a set of actual circumstances may take a whole generation to establish, the deductions another generation, and the conclusions still another. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, the protagonist is the unhappy victim of the chain of circumstances which he himself had started. He sets up the postulate for certain action, and is himself enmeshed and crushed in the deductions which follow. He kills his father in order to become the husband of his mother, and then banishes himself from his own kingdom. Tragedy is a logical affair, otherwise it could not be accepted qualitatively as a value; for illogical things present themselves qualitatively as disvalues.

The logic of events may be compared to the syllogism laid down along the time-line moving from the past to the present and into the future. Postulates have been established by events in the past; in present events deductions are drawn, wittingly or unwittingly, from those postulates; and everything concerned works toward conclusions as consequences in the events of the future, conclusions of which we may be unmindful but which operate effectively none the less. By following the chain of events through the time-span in which their logic will be revealed, tragedy is able to recognize the inevitable end of the values involved in those events. Thus tragedy reaffirms the inevitability of logic by emphasizing the effect which the logic of events exercises upon its own inherent values. Thus tragedy is involved in the present or in the future, just as reason is. And, also like reason, it requires more than the present to demonstrate its character.

If logic and consistency are secondarily involved in the axiological considerations of tragedy, it may well be asked why there must be a conflict in tragedy and why positive aims must end in defeat. Both conflict and defeat affirm in different ways the actual limitations on value, in spite of which the value must be accepted and even defended. We fight for what is good and true and beautiful not because we think or hope that these things will exist forever; on the contrary, we know they will not. We fight for them because we know they are valuable, and because we know that whether or not they are banished from actual existence they will nevertheless have their being forever; and we fight for the retention in existence of the values of being. Nothing of value can ever be destroyed simply by being removed from actuality. What is actual is always possible, and what was actual or what may (or may not) someday be actual is still possible; essence is a larger and more inclusive category than existence. In recognition of the higher status of value, actual values have their limited cycle and eventually meet with disaster; and those who fight for the good and the true and the beautiful, provided that the fight goes on long enough, are sure to be brought to eventual failure. But through the very disaster and defeat, the infinite nature of value is once more confirmed. We cannot lose in the final sense, just as in a more proximate sense we are not apt to win. Values will be lost from existence but may return eventually.

The tragedy is, then, that particular exemplifications of value cannot be continued indefinitely in existence.[11] Struggle always has its tragic aspect, since there must be a vanquished whenever there is a victor, and tragedy is the

[11] Cf. Francis S. Haserot, *Essays on the Logic of Being* (New York, 1932), p. 443 *et seq.*

victory of the vanquished. Actuality is a mass of major and minor struggles; every actual thing is fragmentary, and every fragment is engaged in a constant striving to complete itself. In this effort it meets with the opposition of other fragments which are engaged in the same pursuit. The contradiction of actual conflict results, a conflict from which currently only one victor can emerge; but there is a consolation prize for the loser: the values on his side, whether lesser or greater than those of his opponent, retain their essence even though not their existence, and hence it will always be possible that they will come into existence again. Hence every tragedy is a fairy story for the values which exist happily ever after, even if not for the carrier of the values who sooner or later must die. His solace is the promise of the return of the values which he cherished, even though this is to be accomplished with the aid of other carriers.

The two ontological universes of the possible and the actual are involved in the meaning of tragedy. Tragedy represents one aspect of the strain between the universes; that what is actual and therefore also possible cannot remain actual, and also that what is possible but non-actual cannot become actual. The first aspect of the strain is an ontological impossibility, in that nothing actual is wholly valuable and non-contradictory; thus it must eventually fall a prey to its logical and axiological shortcomings. Things live by means of their value and consistency, and die as victims of their disvalue and inconsistency. There has been nothing actual which was ever known to be lacking in shortcomings and limitations. The second aspect of the strain, namely that what is possible and non-actual contains no ontological prohibition against actualization, at least none against those possibilities which are not essentially non-contradictory. Thus

in tragedy there is always the note of faith and the note of hope. In the most heartbreaking tragedy there is always the feeling that somehow it is well with the victims and that being is essentially good and right and even beautiful. But despite this positive note, the fact is that the possibilities are not actual and we do not see how they shall become so. Their failure to become actual, continued into the immediate future, is a tragic fact.

Tragedy weaves the two ontological levels together; it runs threads from the possible to the actual and from the actual to the possible. It recognizes elements of the eternal and unchanging in the temporal and the changing; it bids a regretful farewell to those values which are being lost from the world that we know and confidently expects their return on some as yet unspecified occasion, from the assumption *that there is at least nothing illogical in such an expectation.* Thus it tacitly but emphatically recognizes the being of some level other than that of the actual world of action and reaction, and depends upon an interaction between the two universes. Tragedy is metaphysically realistic in its admission of the being of two universes of ontology. If the values conflict here below, if the inconsistencies abound, if justice is seldom done, tragedy at least recognizes that the values, the consistencies and true justice belong to another kind of world; though it says nothing in detail concerning such a world and its order, and thus avoids theology and cosmology except by remote inference and subsidiary implication.

An illustration of how tragedy weaves the two ontological orders together is given in the Greek conception of the cycle of tragedy; success, hubris, nemesis and ruin. In this conception, man is defeated because of his assumption that through perfection he has managed to raise himself from the

is something objective and the level of the eternal. Success at effect upon human beings ed by defiance of the gods, as by that in the following parag divine insolence is followed by an epistemology of tragedy at nemesis who is the guardian psychology; and though nc ings; and after nemesis there is the meaning of tragedy, both is the defeat following hard actual practice of stumbly which is possible is also

The knowl ffection not only can be attained but has been is the d. Similarly, we are furnished with another example of po interweaving of the two ontological orders if we consider the distinction between the romantic and the classic from this aspect. The classic is the pursuit of the eternal values for their own sake, as though they were inclusive of the temporal; the romantic is the pursuit of the temporal values for their own sake, as though they were themselves eternal. In this way we are enabled to view the tragic hero, the defender of lost causes, either from the romantic or the classic perspective.

We have defined tragedy as that aspect of artistic value which is concerned with the qualitative presentation of the acceptance of the content of actuality. We have noted that tragedy affirms the ideal axiological order by this acceptance. How, then, does it happen that when tragedy is confronted with a situation involving disvalue, it behaves in exactly the same way? The answer to this apparent dilemma is that the highest and most symbolic instance of the acceptance of value in actuality would be the acceptance of the smallest amount of value. But the smallest amount of value is not value at all but disvalue. From the point of view of positive value, the smallest amount of value is the largest amount of disvalue. We see this illustrated graphically in mathematical analysis, when we plot negative values for y on the scale of

rectangular coordinates, and find the of faith and the note of for $-y$. We see it illustrated, too, ragedy there is always the recited in the *Apology* of Plato, with the victims and that accusers after he has been unjustl ht and even beautiful. But they must suffer the penalty of w t is that the possibilities are abides by his award: "P how they shall become so. think that they are we ual, continued into the immediate highest affirmation of eter and positive valu in the embracing of the largest amount of disvalue in ac er; it ity. Tragedy, we may now say, consists in the direct affirm the tion of the ideal axiological order by means of the acceptanc al not only of the positive content but also of the disvalues of actuality.

We have discussed the logic and the ontology of tragedy. Readers who are oriented toward human values to such an extent that nothing makes sense without them, will want to know something concerning the relation of the tragic to the human. This topic involves a further discussion, this time one on the epistemological, the psychological and the ethical meaning of values. We shall want to return to the perspective from which we started, however, and this will be done by relating tragedy to other aesthetic elements. In the meanwhile we have committed ourselves to a specific point of view by the very order in which the topics relevant to the meaning of tragedy have been treated. If the definition of tragedy, and its other logical and ontological aspects, can be considered without reference to our knowledge of tragedy or our reactions to it as human beings, then obviously tragedy itself must be to some extent independent of such considerations. That is indeed the position advanced here. Tragedy is, as we have already seen, a thing in itself independent to some extent of all other things. From the human point of view, it

is something objective and external. As such it does have an effect upon human beings, however; and it is this effect that in the following paragraphs we shall consider. There is an epistemology of tragedy, and more pertinently, there is a psychology; and though neither of these topics is central to the meaning of tragedy, both well may be important in the actual practice of tragedy.

The knowledge of tragedy is gained to some extent just as is the knowledge of any other item. Tragedy from the viewpoint of epistemology is an object, and the knower of the tragic is the subject. The subject is not entirely devoted to the knowledge of tragedy, since there are so many other things to be known, and the object of tragedy is not entirely occupied with the subject since there are so many other subjects. Thus the relation is one which can be switched on and broken off without entailing the disaster of either subject or object in the case of tragedy. The tragic object is what it is whether or not the subject is standing in the position of knower. We may term this position a perspective. Tragedy always occupies a perspective, and we may assert that every object has its potential perspective. When this perspective is occupied by a subject, there takes place the knowledge of tragedy, occasioned in the subject by the object. Knowledge, the knowledge of tragedy, then, is a result of the occupancy of a perspective.

Everything in the world is limited and fated, as we have noted earlier. Each thing in a sense travels about with its own perspective. When this perspective is occupied by something capable of knowing (and in the highest degree known this something is a human being), there is knowledge, the knowledge of tragedy. The truth of tragedy is the one-to-one correspondence between the view from the perspective

of tragedy and the tragedy itself, plus the coherence which is the consistency of a given tragic view with the tragedy of other views. The ability to stand in the perspective of tragedy is for a subject a question of his equipment. Not everyone has the necessary equipment. To one without sympathy and the code of a certain obligatory behavior of children toward their parents, for instance, the tragedy of *King Lear* might very well be meaningless. Yet that would be no argument for the essential meaninglessness of *King Lear*. Tragedy would be tragedy even if there were no one capable of occupying the perspective necessary in order to gain the knowledge of it.

In formal art the elements of tragedy are intensified, so that the knowledge of tragedy is more readily gained from it than from everyday life. Yet the knowledge of tragedy is not confined to art but may be acquired through pedestrian events. The death of a nobody who may have had important ambitions is tragic, even though the tragedy had been apparent only to his wife and children; assuming that not enough persons crossed his path who would have been able to glean his moral by occupying the perspective which would have made the knowledge of his tragedy available to them. Tragedy is charged with the capability of exercising a certain effect; it is an object full of potentialities for subjects; and when a subject, that is to say, a knower, wanders into its perspective either deliberately or by chance, or perhaps even unwillingly, it works its influence upon him. The subject does not have to stand in the perspective of tragedy, but when he does he has to know it, just as a certain logic is inexorable but only to those who have accepted its postulates.

The psychological aspects of tragedy differ from the episte-

nological in that the former are concerned with the effect of tragedy upon the person rather than with the way in which the knowledge of tragedy is obtained. In order properly to consider the psychology of tragedy, we must reverse the subject-object order which we have found obtains in the knowledge process, and consider tragedy as the subject of the psychological effect and the person as the object upon whom that effect is exercised. Immediately it becomes obvious that there are more subjects than objects. Tragedy is tragedy whether it is observed or not; tragedy is not exclusively human, but there is, of course, human tragedy.

That tragedy does exercise a psychological effect has been known for some time. Plato observed that people enjoy their weeping[12] and Aristotle said that the tragic pleasure is that of pity and fear,[13] a statement which Plato had made more specifically in the *Laws* but which Aristotle elaborated into his famous doctrine of the effect of tragedy as one of purgation through pity and terror. Plato did not say enough; Aristotle went too far. The Aristotelian explanation was perhaps occasioned by the feeling of exhaustion combined with satisfaction that accompanies the enjoyment of a good tragedy. This, however, is the after-effect, not the effect. The effect of tragedy is rather what Edmund Burke declared it to be: a matter of sympathy. The conflict between value and existence, evident in tragic events whether enacted in ordinary life or depicted on the dramatic stage, has its effect upon the human individual in the sympathy which it evokes in him. We may here go further than Burke in declaring that the response of the person to

[12] *Phil.* 48.
[13] *Poet.*, 1453[b] 10.

the stimulus of the tragic is one of empathy, the quasi-projection of the self into the contemplated situation. All positive feelings are substantial connectives; and in the feelings prompted by the apprehension of a tragic situation, we know ourselves to have the capabilities and the limitations which make us the brothers of those who are suffering. When a character in a drama, or a person in actual life, is confronted in his aims by the more powerful aims of other elements of his environment (which includes of course other human individuals with their aims), we know that there but for the accidents of circumstance go we; hence symbolically we are defeated in his defeat and we die his death, at least in spirit. We feel for him as we assume he must feel for himself; and we are rent by his failures and consoled only by the knowledge that the values for which he stood cannot perish utterly but always may return. Thus dwelling within the divine part of man is his sense of tragic value, a sense to which his reasonings as well as his feelings guide him.

The after-effect of which Plato and Aristotle speak is the enervation that comes from dealing with the qualitative nature of things. To touch essentials is an exhausting experience; it makes us feel better, but also it makes us weary. The very intensity of the feeling might be expected to do that. With the exhaustion, however, there also flows wisdom. We may be tired out by the intense witnessing of a tragedy; who could help it after enduring even in representative form the trials and the death of the hero and the transfiguration of the values for which he stood? We may be weary, but we have also grown a little more understanding. The vicarious experience, which is sympathy with the tragic, has taught us something; we have learned to be aware that while we, too,

must pursue the values in existence, there is for us also a fundamental contradiction in actuality, a conflict of values and existence, and the temporary but otherwise complete triumph of disvalue to which some day our efforts must succumb. Thus tragedy has an educative worth, and those who have not been allowed to experience tragedy by having the tragic happen to them in some measure fall short of being wise; their position is made possible only by a certain understandable blindness.

Those, too, who have not learned to appreciate tragedy as it exists in the arts also lack something; they have not been able to view tragedy objectively and in high concentrations. Their lives are not as rich as they might otherwise be; their experiences will not be intensified as the experience of tragedies might have intensified them. To possess feeling and comprehesion for the arts and to exercise these means to live a deeper and a fuller life. For some ethical theorists, the good life is the beautiful life; yet no one can touch beauty without being hurt somewhat, without experiencing the tragic. Such theorists went too far, so far as strict ethics is concerned, yet surely there is something valid in what they have maintained.

Tragedy is related to practical ethics in that it teaches us by example to seek the good. The assumptions of tragedy involve the postulate that nothing evil has any possible future, whatever its successes in the present of actual existence may be. The good, on the other hand, represented by the contemplation of events as they ought to be through viewing the actual or symbolic enactment of things as they are, has a future however remote and a being however tenuous. Knowing this about the good, who could resist the desire to pursue it? In this wise, the psychological and

the educative aspects of tragedy are closely linked with the ethical. The values of which we spoke in our definition and explanation of the nature of tragedy are none other than those of the good and the beautiful, together with the rational value of the true. What applies to both the good and the beautiful applies to the good.

As for the beautiful, we must remember that tragedy is an aesthetic topic; and we shall expect that the tragic has more peculiar relevance to the beautiful than it has to the other values. Such indeed is the case. We have noted that tragedy exists in actual life as well as in art; yet tragedy-as-art is an intensification of tragedy-as-life, and so we shall take our aesthetic considerations of tragedy from the field of the arts. The beautiful involves the harmony of parts in the whole: when anything has this property of perfect relatedness, it is said to be beautiful. We have, in a way, already referred to the specific aesthetic aspects of tragedy in the definition given at the outset of this chapter. What is perfect is more acceptable; and the *value* of the perfect relation of parts to whole is that of the beautiful.

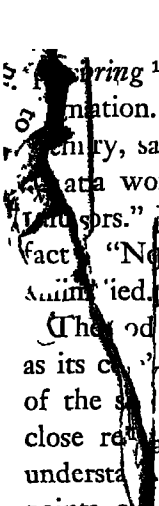
In a perfect tragedy, everything falls into place. The circumstances that lead, say, the protagonist to do what he does; the logical deductions in action with which as a result he gets himself involved; the forces of antagonism, or perhaps of an antagonist, that thwart him, as, in accordance with the dictates of the shortcomings of actuality we should expect that something or somebody would do; his struggles which are so unavailing, and his final disaster or death which was so obviously inevitable; these are the parts of which a tragic whole is made. Other examples could be adduced, but in the end the effect is the same, and we almost shrink as the impact of the sheer beauty of the logic of tragic events

makes itself evident in all its power and in all its glory. What happens is not always so beautiful, though it may be; but out of the pieces of what happens, the dramatic artist forges a portrayal of what ought to happen. The perfect intentions and actions of the tragic protagonist who fights for the good, for some specific justice or success, the efforts of the hero who fights no less well because he knows that the cause for which he fights (whatever it may be) is foredoomed to eventual failure, are rarely justified in the short run and rarely betrayed in the long run, being more concerned with value than with victory; and the spectacle of such logic in the smooth functioning of its parts is very beautiful indeed.

That tragedy is only an aspect of artistic value is, of course, obvious: besides tragedy there is comedy, which has also an artistic value. The meaning of tragedy can be made somewhat more evident, perhaps by contrasting tragedy with comedy. In the terms in which we have defined tragedy, comedy is that aspect of artistic value which is concerned with the qualitative presentation of the shortcomings of actuality. Both comedy and tragedy are expressed qualitatively; but where tragedy is concerned with content, with values *qua* values, comedy is concerned with the limitations on those values. Comedy proposes that what is funny is a thing not being what it ought to be, and emphasizes the ludicrousness of the shortcomings of things in actuality. Comedy is indirect, tragedy is direct. Seen in psychological terms, comedy is the more intellectual of the two, and tragedy the more emotional; comedy is detached and contemplative, and does not require that we put ourselves in the position of those in the comic situation. Where there is laughter, there is apt to be little sympathy except in the grand sense. But where there is tragedy, there is participation

rather than contemplation. Tragedy asks us not to contemplate but to take part, at least in projected empathy with the tragedy of the situation. Comedy views the present with regret and condemns it at least in symbol for not being better than it is. Tragedy views the present as the helpless child of the past, with certain virtues of its own, which are virtues irrespective of what they have come from or what they lead to; but doomed nevertheless. Comedy thus points to reform, in showing what the conditions of actuality are that stand in need of improvement; it calls for action, for planning, for effort. Tragedy, on the other hand, points to acceptance, in showing what there is about actuality which though limited is valuable; it calls for faith, for belief and for hope. Tragedy is the deeper, comedy the more critical and therefore the more penetrating and keener. But despite the uses of comedy, it is tragedy that we must lean on at the last, for the simple reason that after our improvement is accomplished and our amendments executed, there is a residue of the unfulfilled, a remainder of what could be but is not, a failure and an end and a defeat, constantly reminding us how the things for which we fight must perish for a little while, and how we can only hope that they will come again because we know that if certain things are good they must be good regardless of whether they exist or not. Comedy and tragedy are complementary aspects of existence; the former emphasizing logic, the latter values; both are required if we are to enjoy and to benefit by the artistic view of the nature of things.

Tragedy has cosmological and even theological aspects. We have already noted that while tragedy is always tragic, it does not always have to close in absolute disaster and defeat, for there is always a kind of triumph inherent in the fact that the values which are removed from actuality do



spring[14] on the[illegible]g but are always possible, and therefore [illegible]nation. "Do c[illegible]y destroyed. The Greek tragedies, partic-[illegible]ntry, says to Aeschylus, contain the idea of the perfecti-[illegible]ata wong[illegible] actual universe. If God is all good and all [illegible]ors." [illegible]combination which, in the light of the existence fact[illegible] "N[illegible]logical. nsistent, then He will in the future improve [illegible]ied. from lte from Gilbert Murray's translation of [illegible]The[illegible]od to that [illegible] as its c[illegible], the f*sire of God be indeed of God!*" of the [illegible] would close re[illegible]anchibility of the universe, a property more likely understa[illegible]d itself in the remote future, but indicating a per-points o[illegible]acord which we can work in the present, has been similarity[illegible]r us, this time in terms of the logic of probability, [illegible]hapter, o[illegible]rican philosopher, Charles S. Peirce, in his notion [illegible]bus[illegible]ited community. Chance, said Peirce, begets [illegible]se[illegible]e likelihood of the laws of nature asserting them-c[illegible]o[illegible] human events is very high. Hope in the future rests up[illegible]istics which can be mathematically demonstrated. act[illegible], unlike comedy, is positive, and its positive char-reach[illegible]more han justified. For the tragic, which is content the[illegible]m and embrace the limited values of actuality in the [illegible]e faith and knowledge that they *are* values. is willing to face death and dissolution gladly and even gloriously, though the circumstances in which they occur be small and ignomin-ious indeed, because it is only the values which can triumph ultimately; and we shall have a share in their triumph posthumously as evil slowly but surely is abated, as con-tradictions are resolved and the ugly transformed. The great-est art is tragic art, and the greatest art is that which tran-scends art itself.

The common goal of the values and of their analysis into truth is one which can be approached through many avenues.

In the theatre, for instance, we may th us not to co.. Chekhov or of John Webster, as that of d empathy with But the plays of Aeschylus and Shakespea: present with bound down within the confines of art. For thiot being art of the theatre was a means only and not anhelpless so universal is also cosmological and even theonich are the hands of Aeschylus, Prometheus is translateor what position as a culture-god in the Greek pantheon s points the God of Reason. Zeus was, as Aeschylus saw lity are rational god. Similarly, Shakespeare took what ion, for rational terms be considered merely a gentle meloints to sort of sweetly disillusioned viewpoint, and showy which peculiar to the contemplative human being in his lief and in so far as that life is forced to be one of actio critical peare demonstrated that man with all his limitat despite a forthright portion of the cosmical universe, lean on at undeniable being, existentially expressed. It is thavement is lies at the heart of tragedy. a re

We are now in a better position to understand the ment made at the outset of this chapter. There is no distin tion between the meaning of tragedy as it occurs in ordinar life and in art except one of greater intensification in the case of the latter. Art deliberately points up the values which in ordinary life exist in somewhat more diffused form. The cosmological meaning of art is the meaning which includes both the lesser meanings which tragedy has in art and in ordinary life. The ultimate beauty of the universe becomes dramatically exemplified by the acceptance of the disvalues of actuality as themselves somehow good; and this is the meaning of tragedy. This definition of tragedy might be essentially retained as a true proposition concerning certain aspects of the nature of all things.

COMEDY is a unique field similarity but as an intrinsic value, and as such compar- chapter, o intrinsic values. As intrinsic it cannot be but s o ome reduced. There are no words to describe logi ise wh intrinsic aspect of any value—it just *is*. All that log can hope to do is to effect an analysis. Such a logical analysis must consist in the tentative segregation of the field itself and in the exploratory attempt at definitions. It is this task to which we must address ourselves.

Comedy is one kind of exemplification that nothing actual is wholly logical. Expressed as the truism that nothing finite is infinite, that nothing limited is ideal, this truth appears to be self-evident. Yet such is not the case. Self-evidence is an *a priori* judgment, and has often been disproved in practice. It is a notorious historical observation that customs and institutions rarely enjoy more than a comparatively brief life; and yet while they are the accepted fashion they come to be regarded as brute givens, as irreducible facts, which may be depended upon with perfect security.

All finite categories, the theories and practices of actuality,

are always comp[for instance, we may th us not to co... ments which can John Webster, as that of d empathy with given the limitatic of Aeschylus and Shakespeare present with the categories of ac hin the confines of art. For thnot being and seldom what the was a means only and not anhelpless to make this plain. 1 cosmological and even theonich are new institutions, for bein Prometheus is translateor what more effectively makes fu in the Greek pantheon s points their usefulness and have c was, as Aeschylus saw lity are ther progress. A constant Shakespeare took what ion, fo logical order as the perfect g merely a gentle melpoints t tinually insists upon the limitatic point, and show whic of all actuality. The business of com being in his lief an thus make more vivid and immediate the ne of actio critica tions in actuality must prove insuppor is limitut despite monishes against the easy acceptance of verse, lean on and calls for the persistent advance toward is th ve order and the final elimination of limitations.

Comedy, then, consists in the indirect affirmati n of the ideal logical order by means of the derogation of t ne limited orders of actuality. There are, of course, many an d diverse applications of this principle. It may, for example, be achieved (1) by means of direct ridicule of the categories of actuality (such as are found in current customs and institutions), or it may be achieved (2) by confusing the categories of actuality as an indication of their ultimate unimportance, and as a warning against taking them too seriously. Comedians from Aristophanes to Chaplin, from Daumier to the Marx Brothers, have been occupied with the illustration of these approaches. The first is the method employed by Ring Lardner; the second, that employed by Gertrude Stein. A good example of (1) is the satire in Hemingway's *Torrents*

...ring[14] on the contemporary outlook of the literary ... ation. "Do come home, dear," Diana, the girl in the ... ry, says to her man, Scripps. "There's a new *Mercury* ... a wonderful editorial in it by Mencken about chiro... prs." Would that do it, she wondered. Scripps looked fact... "No, I don't give a darn about Mencken any more," ...ied.

The ...od example of (2) is contained in one of T. E. as its c... 's replies to the proofreader's queries concerning of the s... *Pillars of Wisdom.* To an objection that his trans... close re... rabic names was full of inconsistencies, Lawrence understa... here are some 'scientific systems' of translitera... points o... to people who know enough Arabic not to similarity ... but a wash-out for the world. *I spell my names* ...hapter, o... *ow what rot the systems are.*"[15]

... bu... of comedy are fond of pointing out the element of su... ise which en... to every comic instance. Something is expected and does not happen; the result is comedy. A man sits down but the chair has been snatched away and he falls on the floor. As crude as this is, it is true comedy. But the attempt to hold comedy down to the failure of expectation follows from the wrong interpretation of what is involved. First of all, comedy does consist in the absence of something which is expected, but it can also consist in the presence of something where nothing is expected. Always, however, the situation must illustrate the absence of what ought to be, if it is to reveal comedy. The unexpected indication of the absence of perfection (the *ought*) constitutes the comic situation.

[14] P. 131.

[15] *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, p. 25 (italics mine). See in this connection the whole of Lawrence's answers to the proofreader as excellent examples of true comedy.

Corresponding to the unexpected something and t expected nothing in th above analysis are the ter humor known as unde tement and exaggeratio ane statement shows vividly the absence of something h expected. It does not ridicule current estimations in to show their limitations, but achieves the same end by means. The beautifully simple means employed cons the failure to take current estimations seriously on jus its occasions when they are most expected to be taken s are Charles Butterworth, the screen comedian, is a f for this kind of comedy. When on one occasion he hits t a very elaborate statue, so large that all of it co whic included in the camera's focus, he observed lief an "Very artistic." Again, when introduced to a critica wore orchids and ermine, Butterworth said, ut despite white." on a

Exaggeration shows the presence of something where nothing is expected. Exaggeration is more common than understatement because it is so much easier to effect. Exaggeration ridicules current estimations by pushing the emphases to their apogees. Exaggeration takes the evaluations of the day, so to speak, at their word, accepts them as almost the whole truth. The features which the cartoonist singles out for attention are made to stand for the whole face. Charlie Chaplin's shoes, the cascade of knives which flows from Harpo Marx's pockets, the grammatical errors of Lardner's people—the list is practically endless. One familiar form of exaggeration is the grotesque. The grotesque is that form of exaggeration which occurs under the species of the ugly; and it works by combining the most unlike parts into a single whole. The half-animal, half-human gargoyles of Gothic architecture are examples. The fact that the creatures

isting of a combination of plant and animal parts, or of nal and human parts, unities of different kinds of life, em more grotesque than those made up of inanimate com- ations, has its own meaning. The higher we go in the s of organizations, the more subtle and tenuous but also fact more important the differences. Hence the combination her with lower animal forms appears grotesque. The The ne also conveys the idea that while all is ultimately as its c One is not made up of a random collection of parts of the s ogether helter-skelter but consists in a graded close re of levels. The grotesque, too, then, as a form of understa a qualitative call to order. Both understatement points o ation point the moral that by exceeding the similarity ts of actual things and events, the arbitrary and hapter, o ure of these limits can be demonstrated. Thus co s an antidote to error. It is a restorer of proportions, and signals a return from extreme adherence to actual programs, in so far as these programs are found to be faulty. Thus indirectly comedy voices the demand for more logical programs.

Needless to say, this kind of ridicule does service to the ideal, to the truth of an ideal society, by jesting at things which in the current society have come to be taken too seriously. Customs and institutions, in virtue of their own weight, have a way of coming to be regarded as ultimates. But the comedians soon correct this error in estimation, by actually demonstrating the forgotten limitations of all actuals. In this sense the clown, the king's jester, and the film comedian serve an important function. This function is to correct overevaluation, by exhibiting current evaluations in the light of their shortcomings. The corrosive effect of humor eats

away the solemnity of accepted evaluation, and thus
for a revaluation of values.

Inasmuch as comedy deals chiefly with current evaluatio
its specific points bear always upon the contemporary wor
The butt of its jibes may be shortcomings which have
joyed a long and rather persistent history, or they ma
merely evanescent and fashionable assumptions whic
doomed to a short career. In either case they are its
highly contemporaneous. For example, the desire are
significant men to appear important, as when Bac fo
on the lion's skin and club of Hercules, in Aristoph its t
Frogs, illustrates foibles which can easily be sho whic
been a weakness of human nature throughou lef an
time, and which still holds true of members critica
society. despite

Yet there are many contemporary allusions in on
play, some of which are now identified as having bee aimed
at known historical figures of Aristophanes' day, while
others are permanently unidentifiable. When actual things
and events have vanished, comedies which criticized them
begin to date. *The Frogs* is valuable to the extent to which
its criticisms remain applicable. Despite this saving element
of atemporality, in the main it is true that classic comedies
require extensive footnotes giving historical references, in
order to render particular satires intelligible.

Thus the contemporaneity of comedy is one of its es-
sential features. Sherwood Anderson is speaking for all
comedians when he exclaims, "I want to take a bite out of
the now." Comedy epitomizes the height of the times, the
zeitgeist. Hanging upon the vivid immediacy of actuality, it
touches the unique particularity embodied in the passing
forms of the moment. A criticism of the contradictions in-

[illegible] in actuality, it must inevitably be concerned with [illegible]st ephemeral of actuals. Since its standpoint is always [illegible]gical order, it deals critically with the fashions of [illegible] places—because they are not ubiquitous, and with [illegible]f specific times—because they are not eternal.

[illegible] have seen that some comedies criticize customs and [illegible]tions which are no longer viable, while others go [illegible] to those which are still effective. Following upon this [illegible]on, it is possible to divide comedies into the romantic [illegible]classical varieties. Romantic comedy deals with that [illegible]s actual but is now remote; classical comedy deals [illegible] which is always true and therefore perennially [illegible]dless to add, the division is not an absolute one, [illegible]stances of comedy contain elements taken from [illegible]s. Yet the division is important. We can perhaps [illegible] clear by further comparison between the classical [illegible] the romantic. Classical comedy is comedy that [illegible]nds toward an absolutistic logical view. In classical comedy, [illegible]e ideal of the rigorous logical order is unqualifiedly demanded by the criticism of actuality. No sympathy is felt for the extenuating circumstances which render that goal difficult of attainment. This uncompromising demand is the criterion of what is classical. It manifests a severity of outlook which marks particularly great comedy, and tends to be of permanent worth.

Nothing, however, is ever completely classic, and there is found throughout all comedy, even the loftiest, a strain of sympathy for the uniqueness of actuality, a nostalgia for the lost particularity of actual things and events, especially when these belong to the past. The mournful regret that remembered events cannot be recaptured in all their frightful but fluid vividity is the hallmark of the romantic. The

romantic tends to relax a little from the uncompromised demand for the logical ideal, and to identify its nature somewhat with the irrevocable uniqueness of elements passing by in the historical order. *Trivia* by Logan Pearsall Smith is replete with romantic comedy, though touched here and there with classic insight. "'I have always felt that there is more interesting, after all, to belong to one's own time, to share its dated and unique vision, that flying glimpse of the great panorama, which no subsequent generation can ever really recapture. To be Elizabethan in the Age of Elizabeth; romantic at the height of the Romantic Movement. But it was no good: so I took a large pear and ate it in silence." [16]

The romantic consists in a partial identification of an critical despite ests with lost or perishable unique actuals. Since soon belong to the past, romanticism implies that lies, or should lie, in the past rather than in the future. Thus romanticism is a form of primitivism. Romantic comedy points out that although passing actuals should have been better than they were, they were better than what has taken their place. The classic, on the other hand, like all true rationalisms, is directed toward the future; since what can happen is a wider category than what does happen, and classic comedy criticizes actuality in order that possible things and events in the future might be more perfect. Thus romantic comedy is shot through with nostalgic regret that *certain* actuals (*i.e.*, specific ones in the past or present) cannot be made better than they were or are, while classic comedy takes the same observations of certain actuals but concludes from these observations that *all* actuals should be better than they are. Where romantic comedy is concerned with a

[16] *More Trivia*, p. 92.

[illegible]nt of actuality, classic comedy is concerned with all

[illegible]he [illegible]ay is properly part of the study of aesthetics. But [illegible]e observed that this would restrict comedy to works [illegible]This cannot be done, since comic elements are confact th[illegible]n much that lies outside the arbitrary aesthetic field. [illegible]limithave already defined and further explained comedy, [illegible]Ther[illegible] a comic aspect inherent in every actual thing and as its c[illegible] short digression will be needed, therefore, in order of the s[illegible] just what is the artistic element in all its field of close re[illegible]ion with which comedy deals. This can best be understa[illegible] exhibiting the logical structure which works of points o[illegible]ith other systems.

similarity[illegible]ece of knowledge, whether it be a thing or an [illegible]hapter, o[illegible]ible object or an abstract system, possesses a foi[illegible]but[illegible]ctu[illegible]. This formal structure consists in a set of primitive propositions or postulates which are arbitrarily set up, in a chain of deductions which are rigorously drawn from them, and in a necessary conclusion. This is not the way in which the structure has been erected historically, but the logical form which it has by virtue of what it is. Perhaps the most familiar example of formal structure is the system of Euclidean geometry. Here the number of postulates is simple and few, the deductions rigorous and the conclusions demanded. As a result, the system enjoys a remarkable generality of application.

This kind of analysis is a common one throughout the realm of abstract systems, such as those of mathematics and theoretical science. But what is not equally well known is that the same analysis can be made of events; nevertheless it is true for them also. Every event possesses some formal structure. An event may be abstracted from its context in

the stream of actuality, and considered as a self-ge
system, having its own postulates, deductions, tuality
conclusions. The mere fact that the postulat Comeitio.
plicit rather than explicit, and the deductive a will b wor
ing perhaps a matter of instinctive or ev rt. e
reaction, does not alter the fundamental forma d i
the structures. A man who chooses to go to th e
lost dog which manages to find its way home, is ts
which winds its way to the sea, are equally goo ire
of the principle that all actions are purposive, a for
must be served by mechanisms which are analy to
strictly logical systems. ic

What is true of abstract systems and events, v an
to their formal structures, is also true of works itica
works of art also have their formal structures, th espite
are perhaps not so candidly expressed. Indeed it on a ery
difficulty presented by the problem of abstracting the formal
structures of works of art which has led critics to suppose
that no such thing exists. Nevertheless, it remains true that
without their formal structures nothing actual could be.
Works of art are sometimes admitted to have organization
of a sort; but what such organization could consist of with-
out formal structure cannot be imagined.

As a matter of fact, a close inspection of any work of art
will bear out the truth of this contention. In some art
mediums the form is more apparent than in others. For in-
stance, the theme and variations scheme of most musical
scores has a logical form which lies fairly obviously at the
surface, and may be easily discerned by most appreciators.
Indeed it is well known that any thorough musical appreci-
tion must be grounded in an understanding of the form of
the composition. The theme, or themes, announce the postu-

nd the variations illustrate the deductions which are rom them. In the novel much the same holds true. racters and situations as the reader finds them at the re here the postulates; the actions and interactions haracters are the deductions drawn; and the climax the necessary conclusions toward which everything moved. What is true of music and fiction is true of ther kind of work of art; the effectiveness is always entified with a rigorous logical scheme, which is n if never presented as such.

close relati[illegible]t logical disciplines, all claims for the *a priori* understandi[illegible]nt truth of postulates have been abandoned. points of di[illegible] there has been substituted what is known as similarity, W[illegible]al method. This amounts to nothing more hapter, only [illegible]tion of the arbitrary selection and objective exis[illegible] but fr[illegible] post[illegible]tes, which must rest not upon their self-evident truth but upon the fruitfulness of deductions made from them (*i.e.*, the generality of their possible range of application) together with the self-consistency of the system of deductions itself. Now, what does this mean in terms of works of art? It means simply that the subjective claims of intuition and the creative claims of the artist must be somewhat abated in favor of the deductive aspect. Induction and the artistic process are not to be abandoned, since there is no other method known for the discovery of works of art, but the fact is to be recognized that such inductive processes rest upon the prior assumption of a logical scheme in terms of which the inductions are made. Postulates are chosen by the artist by means of induction; necessary conclusions are drawn from them by means of deduction. Thus although the insight of the creative mind is an indispensable tool in the production of works of art, it yet remains true

that the process, as well as the final product of the [illegible] itself, is strictly logical.

In this connection, it may be remarked [illegible] that the genius of the artist lies largely in the [illegible] postulates. Once they have been chosen, he [illegible] his ingenuity in determining where the propelents [illegible] can be drawn. In a highly organized work of art [illegible] which is technically perfect), all possible deductions drawn. For here aesthetic economy has demande [illegible] postulates be kept few and simple, and therefore [illegible] of possible deductions severely limited. The b[illegible] fugues are illustrations of the latter type of [illegible]

The criticism which comedy makes of all[illegible] and events is aimed specifically at their fo[illegible] Formal structure is alone responsible [illegible] actual value; and it is this lack with which come[illegible] dissatisfaction. But warning must be issued against a grave danger which lurks in this fact. It is a mistake to suppose that ridicule leveled at the limitations of any actual system is being directed at the idea of system itself. To make fun of some man dressed for an afternoon wedding is not to make fun of formalism in dress, but might indeed be a plea for stricter attention to appropriate proportions in formal dress. To deride our government's shortcomings is not to deride the necessity for some sort of government but is rather a demand for better government. Theories and practices are criticized not because they are theories and practices, which in one form or another must always have their place, but because they fail to be sufficiently wide and inclusive. Comedy, we must remember, upsets the categories of actuality only with the purpose of affirming the logical order. The literal nonsense of Gertrude Stein calls for the estab-

[illegible]f wider conventions in prose than those which [illegible]prose came to destroy.

[illegible]t, it is not the content (*i.e.*, the value) which is [illegible]icized in comedy, but the limitations put upon that [illegible]ticism of formal structure means criticism of the fact that the content contained in formal structure is not unlimited content.

There is nothing which does not have its tragic as well as its comic aspect. Comedy and tragedy are both members of the same class of objects, and are known to bear some close relation to each other. It will aid, therefore, in the understanding of comedy to contrast it with tragedy for points of difference, and to compare them for points of similarity. We have already done this once in an earlier chapter, only there it was for tragedy; here it will be done again but from the point of view of comedy. In order to make clear what we are talking about, it will be best to begin with definitions. We have already defined comedy as an indirect affirmation of the logical order by means of the derogation of the limited orders of actuality. What is required now is a definition of tragedy which can be set over against this definition of comedy. Tragedy, as we have seen, is the direct affirmation of the logical order by means of the approval of the positive content of actuality. Tragedy is content to endorse the threads of the logical order as these are found running through the historical order.

Tragedy affirms the infinite value of the world through the endorsement of the remorseless logic of events. This blind faith in the triumph of the logical order over the contradictions and evils of actuality survives the observation that in any limited time the logic of events may be accomplishing more harm than good. According to Dorothy Norman, Al-

fred Stieglitz has related an anecdote which illustrates well this aspect of tragedy. "When someone asked him what his own [illegible] he understands by the word 'justice,' Stieglitz replied: 'In the valley [illegible] there are two families, equally fine. They go in for [illegible] there they build their farms. Their houses are [illegible] built; their situations on the hillside are equally advantageous; their work is equally well done. One day there is a storm which destroys the farm of one of them, leaving the farm of the other standing intact. That is my understanding of the word 'justice.'"

Among the best examples of tragedy are the Greek dramas of Sophocles and Aeschylus. In the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles, the hero unintentionally sets off a chain of circumstances, of which he is himself the unhappy victim. Unwittingly, he sets up a postulate for action, and is himself enmeshed and crushed in the deductions which follow. He kills his father in order to become the husband of his mother, and then banishes himself from his own kingdom—all without his own conscious knowledge or consent. This play is a true illustration of the dramatist's recognition of the inexorable march of the logic of events, of the logical order as it operates through the medium of history.

There are many points on which comedy and tragedy may be contrasted, which will serve to explain them both in a more thorough manner. Comedy is an intellectual affair, and deals chiefly with logic. Tragedy is an emotional affair, and deals chiefly with value. Comedy is negative; it is a criticism of limitations and an unwillingness to accept them. Tragedy is positive; it is an uncritical acceptance of the positive content of that which is delimited. Since comedy deals with the limitations of actual situations and tragedy with their positive content, comedy must ridicule and



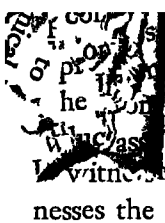
st endorse. Comedy affirms the direction toward
e by insisting upon the absurdly final claims of
s and events. Tragedy strives to serve this same
ut through a somewhat different method. For
o affirms the direction toward infinite value, but does so by indicating that no matter how limited the value of finite things and events may be, it is still a real part of infinite value. Logic being after all the only formal limitation of value which is the positive stuff of existence, tragedy which affirms that positive stuff is greater than comedy which can affirm it only indirectly by denying its limitations.

Comedy is by its very nature a more revolutionary affair than tragedy. Through the glasses of tragedy, the positive aspect of actuality always yields a glimpse of infinite value. Thus tragedy leads to a state of contentment with the actual world just as it is found. According to tragedy, whatever in this finite world could be substituted for the actuality we experience, would still have to be actual and therefore to some extent limited. It would have to be finite to be available for experience, and would not be the infinite value toward which we always are working. The historical order of actuality, wherever and whenever it is sampled, yields a small amount of positive content which must be a fragmentary part of actuality. Thus, tragedy seems to say, since any segment of actuality is bound to be a fragmentary part of infinite value, why change one for another? Better to stress the fact that whatever small fragment of value we have, it is as much value (though not as much *of* value) as any other fragment? Why then, it asks, be dissatisfied?

Comedy, however, is occupied with the termini of things and events, their formal limitations, as opposed to tragedy, which is occupied with their positive stuff or content. If

it is only the limitations of actuality which tragedy must suffer from containing infinite value, those limitations which comedy must be suffered. To justify the demand for the elimination of these limitations is only necessary to point out that they ose, favor of Comedy leads to dissatisfaction and the overthrow of reigning theories and practices in favor of those less limited. It thus works against current customs and institutions; hence its inherently revolutionary nature. Actuality may contain value, so comedy seems to argue, but it is capable of containing more of value; and it is necessary to dissolve those things and events which have some value in order to procure others which have a greater amount. Better to stress the fact that however much value any actual situation may have, it is prevented from having more only by its limitations. Why, then, be satisfied? In periods of social change, we may expect to see the role of comedy assume an increasing importance, although, to be sure, both the comic and the tragic aspects of being are always and eternally omnipresent.

It has been pointed out by Bergson and others that comedy bears a closer resemblance to real life than does tragedy. This is true, and it is very obvious why it should be so. The contradictions and disvalues of actuality wear a greater vividity than do truths and values. In our daily occupations, we are confronted more frequently with the intense aspects of existence than we are with the diffused aspects. Error, ugliness and evil, are, after all, colorful. Truth and value, as found, for example, in the systems of mathematics and the feelings of ecstasy, are wonderful; but they are likewise rare. Everyday life knows much more of the partial and extremely limited side of existence, and it is only a truism to say that this side is more familiar. Fortunately for the progress of humanity, familiarity is no index to value; what we are



ndemned to pursue are just those fleeting glimpses value which come to us so seldom. But it is hich wears the common dress.

, then, criticizes the finite for not being infinite. witnesses the limitations of actuality, just as tragedy witnesses the fragmentary exemplifications of the logical order. Tragedy affirms continuity by showing how it exists in every actual thing and event. Tragedy shows the worth of every actual, down to the most ephemeral, and so is always close to the permanent value of the worshipful. Comedy comes to the same affirmation, but inversely and by indirection, just as one might affirm beauty by criticizing the ugly. Comedy catches the principle of unity in every finite thing; tragedy attends to the principle of infinity.

It should be remembered that our contrast of comedy with tragedy tends toward a misleading oversimplification, as all analysis, of necessity, must. There are subtle relations between comedy and tragedy which reveal them to have more in common than do the rough comparisons we have had to make. Often indeed the connection between comedy and tragedy is so close as to render them hardly distinguishable.

An excellent example of comedy in this sense is afforded by the episode of Alice and the Cheshire Cat, in Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland.* Alice had been nursing a baby, when suddenly, much to her dismay, it turns into a pig. She puts it down and it trots off into the woods. Alice walks through the forest, "getting well used to queer things happening," when with no warning the Cheshire Cat reappears exactly where it had been before. In the midst of this series of marvels, the Cat's conversation assumes the most casual, conversational tone.

" 'By-the-by, what became of the baby? I'd nearly forgotten to ask.'

" 'It turned into a pig,' Alice answered quite as if the Cat had come back in a natural way.

" 'I thought it would,' said the Cat, and vanished again.

Here comedy, too, turns upon the logical order of events, but what events! Through the exposition of their connectivity, limitations are unexpectedly exposed and the comic aspect brought into predominant relief. Or the connectivity is emphasized as one of continuous value, and the tragic aspect triumphs. There is comedy in actual situations whose limitations have been laid bare. There is tragedy in the inexorable march of actual situations, because what value is contained in them will not be denied. Both comedy and tragedy emerge from the same ontological problem: the relation of the logical to the historical order. We may see the actual situation as comedy or as tragedy; for in fact it is both.

Chapter VI

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ARTIST

THE psychology of art is a field which lies within the province of psychology rather than art. For the psychological aspects of art are not the whole of art nor even the most important part, at least so far as art itself is at stake; and, while they are not the whole of psychology, either, they are at the same time more at home with psychology. In the psychology of art, we are dealing with psychic processes in so far as the human being is concerned with art. Yet although it is the human concern with art which is chiefly responsible for the discovery or the making of works of art, the human concern with art is not art; it is merely human concern. Art, like everything else, is ontologically independent of its origins. Hence the psychology of art is more psychological than artistic. A work of art in no way resembles the man who made it or the method by which it was made; and it may differ radically also from its own self in its earlier stages of composition or construction. The things with which a topic is related must be separated from that topic in order to be understood in their proper relations with it. The psychology of art will

throw some light upon the meaning of our main interest.

Inasmuch as there are two psychological connection with art and we intend to treat will be best to begin by making a sharp distinction between them. The psychology of art may be divided into the psychology of art expression and the psychology of art appreciation. The first deals with the psychological processes that take place when a work of art is made. The second deals with the psychological processes that take place when a work of art is enjoyed. Since the appreciation of art does not throw as much light upon the meaning of art as the expression of art does, it is with the latter that we shall occupy ourselves.

I

The psychology of art expression rests upon facts and theories in both psychology and art, and these theories find their basis in, and the various facts bear witness to, a principle which they hold in common and which lies deeper than they do. This theory has to do with the unity of men and nature and with the status of abstract possibility of all occurrences in the human and natural worlds. The world which man has made as well as man himself are integral parts of that larger world which we call nature. Since man is part of nature, anything that he makes out of bits of his environment must be part of nature, too. Now, we usually take the human viewpoint on the things that catch our attention, and indeed it is a little difficult to see how any other viewpoint could be available to us. We are human beings in an irretrievable way, and no matter how we twist

escape the narrowing consequences of

te that question as being of little value,

from the human viewpoint several perspectives are possible. We may take up (1) the frankly human perspective, or (2) the quasi-non-human perspective. Let us see what each of these involves.

(1) We can take the perspective which never allows us to forget ourselves. According to this perspective (and we must never lose sight of the fact that *all our* perspectives are essentially human), the spectacles through which we view the world must themselves be kept constantly in the field of vision. We must insist upon seeing our eyes as well as that which our eyes see, and this fact must be constantly repeated to ourselves in a never ending series of inverted returns. It is, we may as well confess, a little difficult to see what is gained by insisting upon confusing the mechanism with the purpose which the mechanism is intended to serve. The eyes are obviously not what we wish to see but only that by which our seeing is made feasible. A smooth mechanism is one which does not intrude itself upon its function, in the same way exactly that a good organ within the somatic organism never makes its particular presence known: we are never conscious of our liver, say, until the occurrence of some liver disorder. A condition of well-being is one in which we are able to forget our bodies altogether. Hence it is that which lies within the perspective and not the perspective itself that we wish to study.

(2) We can take the perspective which allows us to forget ourselves almost altogether. According to this perspective, we can separate ourselves from our processes of perception and view the world and man's place in it apart from

all egocentric considerations. We can s[illegible] god's-eye view, or at leas[illegible] this perspective see the world together [illegible] his works as a comprehensive whole in wh[illegible] part but in which we from our perspective and for the purposes of that perspective play no part at all. This perspective, let us pretend, is nature's perspective which we have been allowed for the moment to use. It may make it possible for us to see ourselves and some of the things with which we play in a new light and from an angle which we had never envisioned before. And we may return then, to our old familiar perspective with a fresh comprehension which we would not otherwise have been able to gain. In what follows, it will be the second perspective which is as consistently as possible employed. And when we come to a description of the psychological processes themselves, we must bear in mind that the second perspective is still the one we have chosen to take up, and that as a result we are endeavoring to study the artist's mind as an integral segment of the natural world and not as apart from or opposed to it.

The psychological process of art expression, then, is the method whereby nature produces art through the utilization of the objective human perspective. From the viewpoint of nature, the artist is a mechanism employed by nature to achieve her end which is the making or discovery of a work of art. It may be asserted that art is simply an extra complication of nature. For since man, the artist, is part of nature, and the materials out of which works of art are made are parts, too, the resultant works of art must themselves be natural objects. Because there is nothing unnatural about works of art, it is not legitimate to speak of the opposition of nature and art, as though they were contraries or op-

[illegible] to each other in any way. The only [illegible] them separately is the necessity to refer [illegible] part of nature which are not works of art and to [illegible]. A work of art is that part of nature which has been turned into a work of art.

If works of art are natural, it follows that they are not supernatural. According to the postulate which asserts that everything in nature must have some natural explanation could we but find it, a work of art may be a rare object but is too common to be regarded as in any way a miracle. Those whose keen sense of appreciation makes them capable of the most exalted emotions when confronted with a very great work of art are apt to regard their experience as having something of the miraculous about it. But the fact that such experience is of the highest kind does not mean that it is a supernatural experience. For it is not. Any experience which can be reproduced at will is not a supernatural experience, and the work of art, however great, remains there and is continuously capable of exciting exalted emotions in the equipped appreciator. Great artists are not common but they continue to occur among us, and so the artist and his products may be among the highest expressions of human society without having to be supernatural. Thus it is misleading to speak of artistic expression and the making of works of art as any kind of 'creation,' as is so often done. Creation is usually understood to mean a process which has something of the divine about it. For those to whom everything is somehow touched by divinity, art is not to be singled out.

The denial of the divinity of artistic expression and works of art is apt to occasion the wrong impression. It is supposed that if the artistic process is not divine, then it must be merely

mechanical. But this, too, is erroneous. [illegible] is one familiar with the psychological [illegible] company the making of a work of art would be accede to this contention. If art were entirely a [illegible] affair, works of art could be reproduced mechanically and automatically, that is, without the continual assistance of the feelings of the artist. It is true that works of art can be produced occasionally by accident, such as indeed has taken place through the action of rivers on drift wood, for instance. But this is a natural process working without the usual human agency, it is not a mechanical process. In the future, no doubt, a mechanical method will be found for the exact reproduction of works of art. But we know of no way in which we can institute a process or a mechanism which will without further aid produce (not *re*produce) works of art. No two works of art are alike, and hence there is nothing mechanical about them.

The process by means of which works of art come into existence must therefore lie somewhere between the miraculous and the mechanical. What is that process? We have one clue already, for we have seen that a work of art is entirely a natural affair. But what exists in nature potentially does not have to be created or mechanically produced; it only remains to be discovered. The making of a work of art is thus in one sense a discovery, and that which is discovered has had its own nature laid bare and no longer depends upon something else. Hence the work of art, once made, is no longer dependent upon the artist who made it. However, since the artist is intimately bound up with the *process* by which the work of art is made, we must look within the artist for the key to the nature of the artistic process.

The artist does not exist in a vacuum and he is not the mental vacuum. He exists as a member of society and on occasion of his own date and place. Thus what he produces is colored to a great degree by what has produced him. The contrary situation is not essential to his efforts to occasion in a work of art a value which shall not be occasional. History does not determine value. It is quite possible, as we have noted, that an accident of circumstance might be responsible for the making of a work of art whose value is unchanging and permanent, independent of all circumstance. Thus we can see that the artist, like everyone else, is determined by his environment. What is this environment? It is an affair of empirical levels, for there is the physical environment, the biological, the psychological and the social. Each of these is greatly subdivided but for present purposes we shall not need to probe any further. The physical environment is a very important one to the artist. It includes climate, geographical features, etc. What the artist senses is highly significant to his art, and his sensations are dictated largely by what exists to be sensed in his physical environment. The biological environment includes the fauna and flora by which he is surrounded. What diet exists for him, what pets, what animals to serve him, what infectious diseases, what parasites, how densely populated the area, what decorative and useful plants, etc., are all relevant questions so far as the artist is concerned. The psychological environment includes the beliefs which are current in the artist's own social group and which its members directly or indirectly communicate to him. What ideas does he encounter and which of them does he believe? How much impression does the atmosphere of opinion and the color of currently preferred values make upon him as an artist? The psychological environment is even

more important in some ways than the ob[illegible]ist levels we have already mentioned. Lastly, th[illegible] which [illegible]al environment. It makes a whole with the ps[illegible] be wit[illegible]n- vironment and is difficult to distinguish fro[illegible] it, [illegible]t yo[illegible]here is a difference. The social environment includes the cul[illegible]e as a whole together with the structure of the ideas (the *eidos*) and the values (the *ethe*) which dominate it. It includes, as an item of special interest, the works of art which society has deemed great and held as classic. The social or cultural environment is the highest psychic force which is brought to play upon the artist and it influences him in ways of which he is not even aware. Thus his efforts to be absolutely and completely original are foredoomed to partial defeat, just as his fears that being subject to influences means he can do nothing that will survive his own life and times are groundless.

The breakdown of the environment in which the artist lives reveals elements that are not peculiar to the artist but concern everyone. The elements here referred to are the sheer phenomena of the real world as it appears, the qualities of the external world that confronts the senses. The artist is peculiarly susceptible to these, but even for him the task of properly perceiving them is an enormous one. D. H. Lawrence observed of Cézanne that he had a forty-year fight to get to know an apple fully and a jug or two not quite so fully.[17] Thus it is not difficult to understand that to the average man the phenomena pass for the most part unperceived. The elements of the phenomena are highly important to the artist because the artist is more than normally sensitive to the factors both ponderable and imponderable in his environment and because the imponderable factors are suggested to him by the elements of the phenomena. When dis-

[17] *The Paintings of D. H. Lawrence.*

The [illegible] sensitivity of the artist with which the artistic process begins we must not allow ourselves to forget the continental influences which through that sensitivity have had their effect upon him and left their marks.

The artistic process begins, then, with the sensations of the artist. These of course are excited in him by the qualitative data of the external world. Art is therefore a reaction as well as an expression: a reaction of the artist to the world as well as an expression of the artist's own personality. The same qualitative data are available to everyone. What makes one man an artist and another not is still an open question. Certainly, however, we do know that the artist is more than ordinarily sensitive and that as a consequence his experiences make an unusually lively impression upon him. They matter to him very deeply, perhaps the most deeply where they concern him the least directly. In fact, the attitude of the true artist may be characterized psychologically as one of *superfluous caring*. He not only experiences the qualities of the external world but he also feels *for* them. Most persons whether they realize it or not are only half awake to the qualities of the external world. The colors, smells, sounds, tastes, textures and pressures that confront the individual make only a half-hearted impression upon him where they make any. The conventional artist, that is, the mediocre artist who receives some prominence in his own day because of the fact that he is readily understood by his contemporaries, is one who calls attention to qualities which have always been faintly or dimly felt by everyone. The *avante-garde* artist, the pioneer in new forms, is one who has undertaken the task of opening the sensations of people to elements in the world around them which they have never before felt.

In addition to qualities, the artist is also sensitive to shapes

and patterns, forms which exist in the external [illegible] qualities and forms as the artist observes [illegible] which [illegible] thetic meaning for him. The average man [illegible] be [illegible] the qualities and forms he observes, but to him they [illegible] have some more pedestrian reading. They mean things to be utilized; raw products to be manufactured, articles to be distributed, advantages or obstacles, friends or foe, etc., etc. But to the artist they do not mean any such thing, at least in so far as the artist is an artist (for every artist is also to some extent many other things: a citizen, a father, a hungry man, etc.). But as an artist, he is not concerned with the utilitarian aspects of what he senses but only with the artistic or aesthetic aspects. And these remain in the realm of qualities and forms *as such*, the realm of elements of phenomena.

The artist begins by appreciating and understanding classic works of art which may fall within his purview. This step is quickly followed by the desire to make a work of art which shall be of his own devising and discovery. The admiration of another's style leads to the imitation of it and then to a new private vision. A sensitivity which can be so highly excited by what exists in the external world has a self-generating property; without additional external experiences it is able to proceed a certain way on its own momentum. For the artist, excited by what *does* exist, goes on to suppose what *could* exist and to be responsive to it. Such a supposition is what is called the imagination, and when employed in a high degree by the artist, the artistic imagination. The artistic imagination is a matter of intensity of awareness. To be able to manipulate the values sensed and the relations known, the individuals and events we learn about, is to have imagination. Thus imagination consists in the qualitative aspect of assuming what could be from what is, both actually and poten-



...o require in the future ... The ... of a vivid imagination is one who can call up ... mental ...ages of things as they could be (and in his opinion ought to be) by placing together in new contexts and associations the elements of the actual world with which he was already familiar (but dissatisfied). The scientist as well as the artist possesses imagination to a high degree, but what distinguishes the artist from the scientist is the type of element with which he is chiefly concerned. The imagination of the scientist is concerned chiefly with the universal relations of phenomena as represented by abstractly expressed laws of possibility. The imagination of the artist is concerned chiefly with the universal values of phenomena as represented by concretely expressed, possible objects.

Having distinguished between the imagination of the artist and that of the scientist, we may return to an emphasis on the difference between the imagination of the artist and that of the ordinary man. Once again, what distinguishes the artist from the ordinary man is not the possession of an extraordinarily lively and sensitive imagination. The ordinary man is perfectly capable of imagining things to be other than they are; but while he does so in a more or less desultory fashion, the artist goes on to do something about it: to paint a picture, model a head, or compose a quartet, devoted to things as he thinks they should be or at any rate might be. Thus what characterizes the artist, what starts him on his way, is not his possession of an imagination, for everyone has that, but his possession of *intense* imagination. The artist takes off from experience but so does everyone else, and it is the way in which he uses that experience that characterizes the artist. His peculiar use of his experience is the fact that he is not confined or limited to it but gets control of it in such a way that he discovers something new with it; and

it is his high concentration of imagination [illegible] possible. Gilbert Murray has pointed out that intensity of imagination is the hallmark of the artist, and that it does not require so very much experience. "Almost the first characteristic which one notes in what we call 'a man of genius' is his power of making a very little experience reach an enormous way." [18] James Joyce left Ireland when he was twenty years old. In 1943, the year of his death at the age of sixty-one, he was still writing about the place of his birth and his early years. The artistic ability is the power to wring an act of experience dry, to extract from it the last drop of meaning and the last little bit of value, which in sum always proves to be greatly more than anyone else had ever suspected there might be in it.

/ We have arrived at the fact that it is intensity of imagination which makes the artist possible, and we know already that this imagination works with the material of experience, with data which the sense experience of the artist has allowed him to gather from the external world. The final product of this process is something which once again issues into the external world: the finished work of art which the artist has made. But we have not yet answered the question, How do artists manage to arrive at the discovery of works of art? This is the central problem of the psychology of art. It is admitted by everyone that works of art have their own peculiar order, organization and even internal logic. It is equally admitted that the artist plies his trade intuitively—through feeling, emotion or imagination, as it is called. How does the imagination of the artist manage to discover the elements of order which are forged into the work of art? These are questions which have required in the past and which will

[18] *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, 4th ed., p. 251.

continue to require in the future more than a little investigation, but something approaching an answer may be hazarded.

In the first place, imagination has more than intensity as a dimension. It also has breadth. The breadth of imagination is the extent of the field over which it ranges. Intensity and breadth of imagination are the coordinates by means of which the value of imagination can be estimated. Breadth of imagination refers directly to the external world. In fact it means just that: how much of the external world is being included in an act of imagination. The artist works through love, and love does not end with its object but reaches through that object to embrace the entire universe of being. Thus when the painter covers a canvas or when the poet types out a sonnet, he is endeavoring to get into the frame or on the page a great many more values than could ever be literally depicted within so narrow a compass. He is trying to symbolize a large segment of existence. The breadth of imagination in a given work of art can be estimated by the number and size of the values to which the work can be said to have reference. Breadth of imagination is characterized by a sweep of inclusiveness which we cannot fail to recognize in the achievements of the man of genius. The personality and acts of Raskolnikov have for Dostoyevsky and those of Don Quixote have for Cervantes an axiological richness of direct reference far in excess of what can be narrowly attributed to the meaning of the student-murderer or to that poor excuse of a knight on horseback. The truly great artist is able not only to feel the abundance and variety of the values which have been actualized in the world but even to add the feeling of some of those values which could be and ought to be actualized; and he is able to do this within the limits of the small span of opera-

tions made possible by the single work of art. But the breadth of the imagination is not the only coordinate which refers to the external world, for the intensity of the imagination does so, too, even though its reference is not as readily evident. Intensity of imagination is an objective affair with the artist. True, it seems to take place within the artist, but we must not lose sight of the fact that it is stimulated in him by things outside him. He has that faculty of imagination which allows him to envisage the things he senses and perceives as existing in new relations. He is one, as Wordsworth so keenly observes of the poet in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, who is as much affected by the absence as by the presence of things. And he strives to make privately viewed things, or images of things, into public objects, in the light of the way in which he has imagined they could be or ought to be. The sense of style possessed by the artist is actually a sense of the fitness of things, a sense of due proportionality; and since nothing exists for him quite in the way in which he imagines it could be or ought to be, he strives to make it so by means of some image-malleable material.

In the second place, the function of imagination involves more than one psychological level in the artist. The bulk of the artistic imagination takes place in the unconscious or psyche (soul) of the individual. That is to say, the storing and discharge of aesthetic energy takes place in the psyche and not in the consciousness of the artist. The psychological life of the human individual is comparable to the iceberg which is always more than three-quarters submerged. The consciousness floats like a film upon the surface of the unconscious and hardly more than represents the multitudinous activities of the whole psyche. The discharge of the psyche at the level of the unconscious spills over into consciousness, but

the storing of its contents does not involve consciousness at all. The inherited and acquired wisdom of the human race—called common sense—is the subject-matter with which the artist deals. He is a myth-maker, a worker in the *sensus communis* who renders our implicitly accepted social beliefs objective through the feeling for their forms. What is technically known now as the unconscious was formerly called the soul. The soul is not merely a storehouse for implicity accepted beliefs and myths; it is also a workhouse where the activities of the psyche which lie below consciousness take place. For that there are such activities as unconscious mental processes no modern psychology would permit us to doubt. The artist's inspiration, then, is a manufactured article, produced by the soul from the raw material of experience.

The relation between the conscious and unconscious parts of the psychological realm, between the *nous* and the *psyche*, between the mind and the soul, is still unknown. So far as the psychology of art is concerned, however, what we can claim to know is that the artistic process involves them both. The psyche or unconscious or soul alone would not be capable of producing a work of art; nobody has ever become an artist or executed a work of art in a light sleep, though many have tried. The actual writing of *Kubla Khan* was done in the full possession of consciousness, as were De Quincey's lucubrations on opium eating. The modern effort by the surrealists to portray the content of the unconscious under the influence of the Freudian exaggerations is done in a calmly and coldly calculating and thoroughly conscious way. But then the consciousness alone would be equally impotent. Not everything about a work of art can be deliberately planned, and it is the unplanned elements which often intrude themselves that make a work of art great.

No artist has ever been entirely rational and none has ever succeeded entirely in the business of guiding the making of a work of art from start to finish. He may begin the process, but somewhere along the line he felicitously loses control, or at least fails in his efforts to exercise full control. Hence it is fair to conclude that the artistic process extends over both the conscious and the unconscious realms.

II

We have now seen something of the tools of the artistic process (the data of experience and the imagination) and also of the places in which the process takes place (the *psyche* and the *nous*). Let us next turn to an examination of the successive steps of the process itself.

Four active stages may be distinguished in the making of a work of art, so far as the psychological aspects of the situation are concerned. These may be described as (1) the reception of the data, (2) the revision in the psyche, (3) the conscious reaction, and (4) the making of the object. It will help to look at each of these separately.

(1) The impression which natural objects make upon the mind of the artist is one to which we have previously paid attention. It should be stressed, however, that the imagination of the artist is a faculty which is already present in his reception of the data that come to him from the external world. The apprehension of sense impression is in one way a passive process. The senses are helpless in the hands of the data. If we look at a blue wall, smell a rose perfume, touch a concrete surface, hear an alto flute, or taste a salt mackerel, we are powerless to alter, change or avoid the blue sight, the rose odor, the rough touch, the shrill sound or the salt taste. The mind of the artist is a sensitive mechanism like a

photographic plate which receives, enters, stores and records the impressions made upon it by the phenomena of the external world. In quite another way, however, the apprehension of sense impressions is active. For the mind is able to *select* that part of the external world from which it wishes to receive its sense impressions. We are able to focus the camera containing the photographic plate upon any object we choose. It is in this latter, active connection that the imagination of the artist already plays a part. For the artistic imagination gets to work first in helping to select the area of the environment from which it is intended to make a further selection, this time of the impressions. The composer of music will direct his attention toward sounds rather than any other sense data, and among sounds he will seek for the kind he prefers; although of course, having selected them and directed his sense organs toward them, he is helpless in their hands and cannot avoid hearing whatever noises enter into the pinna and meatus of his ears.

The reception of the data does not have to be a fresh experience upon every occasion. By data itself is meant the raw experienced material of the external world; but this may have been received upon some past occasion and stored in the memory, and the imaginative act of receiving the data may often be merely a matter of recalling it from memory. The characteristic emotional quality of the reception of the data is the feeling of surprise, and this may occur as much from an act of memory as from a fresh experience. The surprise comes from the fact that the recipient did not expect the data to be exactly what it was. The data always has with it some element of novelty; and so freshness is a concomitant quality of the reception, whether it be a new reception from the external world or a recollection. We are

always a little startled by our memories, since we do not ever know exactly what they will bring back to us. In one sense, every reception of the data, whether from raw experience or from memory, is a first reception; and in this sense it is not untrue to say that every reception is a reception of data from raw experience.

(2) The data received by the conscious mind are next turned over to the psyche, or the unconscious, for revision. It is there that they are actually combined and distributed and in general wholly assimilated. The part played by the unconscious in the artistic process is so large that it may be said to be the chief part. But the duration of its functioning has been described as a fallow period, because the unconscious works while the artist himself may be unaware or only vaguely aware of its working. The artist is usually not aware of its entire functioning, although he may at this time feel like doing little else. If he does anything, it tends to be something irrelevant, and often physical, and usually simple: fishing, sawing wood, or perhaps even desultory reading. From the public point of view it is a period of sterility because the audience is not able to detect in it any act of productivity by the artist. Lay persons are not able to see that this is in a way the artist's most productive time. For it is undoubtedly true that appearances are here deceiving.

This second period of revision in the psyche may be described as one of chaos. Within the soul of the artist all is confusion. What emerges may be clear, for it is the task of the artist to clarify the confusion; but there can be no act of clarification where there is no confusion. A work of art can issue only from the placing of data in new relations and the seeing of new connections between things, and this

step is actually made possible by chaos and confusion. In chaos all things rub shoulders with all things, and hence new connections may be detected by chance and seized. Of course the chaos must have present within it the seed of order, else it is merely chaos. But that is what it means to have the chaos existing within the soul of an artist. Nietzsche, who understood the artist so very well, observed somewhere in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* that it is necessary to have chaos within one in order to give birth to a dancing star, a kind of poetic description of a very essential stage in the artistic process. The artistic soul is a female base, a sort of meeting place and breeding ground where values assemble, unite, and give birth to something new. It is what the chemists call a culture medium, a very thick, largely neutral, field, one in which catalysis is made possible on a statistical basis. A very great many typewriter keys have been completely worn out in the effort to describe what is essentially indescribable, namely the soul of the artist. Except for the tendency toward regularity, which is by nature an affair of statistical probability, and which is felt emotionally by the artist as a longing to bring order into the world, the disorder in the artist's soul has no features except its featurelessness. The properties of chaos will not stand enumeration. But the necessary and essential function which this particular chaos performs is obvious. It makes new combinations possible and hence new artistic insights.

(3) The perception by the artist of these new combinations is an exciting experience, one of which he is keenly aware. In the field of chaos the new relations and values sought are suddenly seized, to be utilized in the making of the work of art. This seizure takes place at the moment when the artistic process spills over from the unconscious

area into the consciousness. The act is a sudden one, dynamic, and even frenzied. When the artist grasps a new vision, he feels like the pioneer and the discoverer which he unquestionably is. It is for him a period of exalted sensibility. He has had a new revelation and his state for the moment at least is one of unspeakable joy. It is something like that divine madness of which the ancients spoke, a period of quick insight, galvanic action and high excitement for the artist. That 'inspiration,' which is held to be the sole and sufficient equipment of the artist by so many laymen, is another name for the immediate perception of new relations and values which takes place on this occasion.

The witness of artists concerning this stage in the artistic process is not far to seek. We have abundant evidence at hand of what it feels like to be inspired in this particular fashion. Perhaps the most graphic descriptions come from two composers, Mozart and Beethoven. Mozart, for instance, declared that he did not hear the separate parts of a musical composition (which after all take some time in order to be played) one at a time and successively but rather all together ("*gleich alles zusammen*"),[19] and Beethoven confirmed this by declaring that the artist sees his whole composition in a single projection ("*in einem Gusse*").[20]

Thus the artistic process which took place chiefly in the unconscious (*psyche*) hands its product over to the conscious mind (*nous*), and the conscious mind receives it in a state of heightened excitement. There can be little doubt

[19] Quoted in Julius Portnoy, *A Psychology of Art Creation* (Philadelphia, 1942, privately printed), p. 27. In this doctoral thesis there has been assembled much important documentary material concerning the artist's own impressions of what he holds the artistic process on its psychological side to be.

[20] *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

that such is the faculty which the artist exclusively possesses, and this is important to bear in mind provided only that we bear in mind also the fact that the conscious stage is the end-product of a process which began in the unconscious.

(4) The actual external and public act of making a work of art follows hard upon the conscious reaction to the perception of new relations in the psyche. There is not much that can be said about this last and final stage in the process. Nearly everyone has seen some artist at work, writing down words or notes, carving in stone, or painting on canvas. This last part of the process, for which the preceding parts may be said to have existed, is predominantly a matter of the keenest consciousness though not entirely so. The unconscious spills over, as we have seen, and in spilling over colors the work of the conscious mind. An artist is often if not always surprised to view his finished work, and he may wonder at it and not be entirely able to recall elements in the work which he does not remember having executed, or remembers only vaguely. For the finished work of art does not exactly resemble any of the elements that went into its composition any more than it exactly resembles the aggregate of them. A finite whole is at a higher axiological level than any of its parts or the sum of its parts. The phenomena of the external world which the artist first received have undergone a radical revision and alteration; and the mind, as well as the psyche to which it belongs, has acted as a tool which the finished product leaves behind. Even the artist, a chaotic creature possessed with the striving for order, is eventually an alien before his own work of art—which when finished may be said logically to be no more his own than it is anyone else's. In the making of a work of art, however, the whole artist has been at work, with his

soul, his conscious mind, his terrible intensity and devotion of effort, his whole being. And he experiences a feeling of relief, of letdown, of emptiness, as well as of accomplishment, when a particular work of art is completed and done.

III

We have now, after examining the psychological tools with which the artistic process is conducted, enumerated and considered the four psychological stages in the production of a work of art. Our task is not yet completed, for we have to consider the logical analysis of the psychological process. The time is almost gone when it was erroneously believed that psychology could throw light upon logic. In the nineteenth century it was falsely supposed that logic was a branch of psychology. The advent of a new logic and the abandonment of the subjectivistic metaphysics has led us to see that logic cannot be a branch of psychology since it applies to more things than enunciated or thought propositions, and since the logic of propositions itself is not entirely a mental affair. Logic is close to ontology, and has relevancy to world conditions, whereas human psychology is confined to the theory of the psyche alone. Thus logic is broader than psychology; and where logic can throw light upon psychology in so far as thinking is or endeavors to be logical, psychology can throw no light upon logic but only upon the logical elements in the process of reasoning. Psychological processes are by no means confined to logic, because not all psychological processes can be reduced to reasoning. But in so far as reasoning, and hence its logical elements, is involved in the psychological processes, a logical analysis of psychological procedures is elucidatory and helpful.

In the psychology of artistic expression, logical form exists as a kind of structural framework. For the making of any work of art, there are (1) postulates, (2) a method, (3) applications and (4) a conclusion.

(1) The postulates of a work of art are those ideas or feelings or both which the artist decides he wishes to express. They are not always conscious, they are never fully conscious; and they are not necessarily all adopted at once. A painter may see something in a face which he wishes to use, a composer may hear a combination of sounds, a choreographer may see a group of work-movements, or anyone of these persons may merely have a feeling which stimulates him to some kind of particular expression. The choice or acceptance of postulates is, in the terminology of logic, an inductive procedure. The logical choosing of postulates usually means that a deductive system has been seen in an inductive flash. It takes place, in the terminology of psychology, by means of intuition. The highest performance of artistic insight is required to fulfill this first step. It is where genius first comes into active play.

It is important to add, however, that artistic intuition or insight is no bolt from the blue. Hard training and complete devotion are prerequisites. Indeed, the elementary steps in the process are all but impossible to trace. What makes a man want to become an artist to begin with? Apprenticeship to art, once a man has decided that this is the career for him, may be somewhat irregular but is none the less arduous and prolonged. He must practice concentratedly and at great length in studying the greatest of his predecessors, in imitating their work, and then in trying to do something tentatively on his own. Thus by the time, when as an adult and professional artist, he comes to choose the postulates

for a particular artistic enterprise on which he wishes to embark, he has behind him, upon which he not only can draw but does draw during every moment of his active life as a practicing artist, long successions of inductive and deductive procedures. He has already seen and tried a good deal and also drawn conclusions from what he has seen and tried. It is a familiar fact that conspicuously great insights in the field of art do not come to capable politicians or manufacturers or scientists, or indeed to anyone except artists. Thus it would be idle for the present purposes to attempt to say which comes first in the artistic process, induction or deduction. In the actual choosing of postulates, induction is first, but then such inductive steps are based upon a long deductive as well as inductive background.

The inductive step which consists in the choosing of postulates is a leap to the conditions which shall determine the making of a given work of art, which thus far only exists as a plan in the artist's mind (but which already exists as a logical possibility in the external world, else its making could never take place). Once the postulates are chosen the artist is to that extent no longer free; he cannot arbitrarily do whatever he wanted to do but only what the postulates allow him to do; he has by accepting them set up his own restrictive conditions. Of course, it is true that he can do whatever he wishes to do, subject to change without notice; but in making any radical changes which involve violations of his postulates he is in effect abandoning those particular postulates in favor of another set. For he cannot execute an orderly work without the consistency which adherence to postulates assures, and he must be confined within the limits set up by the adoption of one set or another.

Let us suppose that a novelist plans a new book. He has

decided on the scene, the date, the plot and the characters together with their relationships to each other. These are his postulates and by them he must be guided. The characters must act in a way consistent with their period and perform according to their own peculiarities. The novelist was free in the beginning to write about anything that interested him. He could have chosen to compose a historical novel about any date, place and people; or a detective novel, with equal latitude; or a contemporary novel; and so forth. But his choice was an act of self-binding; and now, having chosen, he finds himself no longer free. He must abide by the demands of the rules which he has established for himself.

(2) The adoption of a method of artistic expression is part of the acceptance of postulates. Although absolutely essential, in that there can be no work of art made without some method, the method is theorematic; for *what* is to be done takes logical as well as temporal precedence over *how* it is to be done, and the selection of postulates must follow this order. This is true of method in what we shall here term the narrow sense. The selection of a method in the broad sense actually precedes the selection of postulates for any particular work of art. For when a man decides on a career in a particular art, that decision means that he has chosen his method in the broad sense. He may, for instance, decide to become a graphic artist, and among the graphic arts he may choose to specialize in etching. Thus he chooses his method in the broad sense. But then he is confronted with the task of doing one etching at a time, and each time he must choose his postulates: what is the etching to be about? He selects a person or a scene which in his opinion will be a very exciting subject for an etching. He had, we

recall, already chosen his postulates, and now he faces the task of choosing his method in the narrow sense. How is this particular problem at hand to be approached and by what means? That is the problem to be solved next, and it is entirely a question of approach, of method in the narrow sense.

The task of adopting a method logically is a matter of induction, just as was the choosing of postulates. Like the choice of postulates also, the induction to a method is only possible to those possessing a long deductive and inductive background, based on training in the particular field. The method may also be conceived as confining and restrictive to a certain degree, even though it is specifically devoted to means and constitutes a tool whereby the end desired may be sought and perhaps reached. Thus the method is liberating as well as restricting in that it finds a way to do what is desired.

The psychological term for induction is intuition. The correct method for the special occasion (*i.e.*, method in the narrow sense) is decided in a flash of insight. This takes place in a half controlled, half uncontrolled, way, partly in the conscious mind but also partly in the psyche or unconscious. We do not always know what led us to see that a certain way of doing a particular work of art was the only proper way of doing it, given the end we wished to achieve. But we know that once having seen it we are bound by it. And so we understand that our method forms an integral part of the postulates we have adopted and from which all procedure must start.

(3) The applications of the postulates according to the method consist in the actual steps taken to produce the work of art. These may be, as we have said, the modeling

of clay, the writing of notes of music, the writing of lines of poetry, the applying of paint to canvas, or any other specific procedures involving physical action and intended to produce an independent and public product. This is the part of the process which may be viewed objectively. An artist seen at work is generally an artist engaged on this stage of his project. This step is confused in the lay mind with the whole process, whereas it is merely the third step in a series.

The applications are physical but they are also susceptible to logical analysis. It is the very fact that they do constitute a *third* step in the process which makes it possible for us to view the temporal succession of this process with the tools of logical analysis and to see that the applications are largely a matter of deductions. Given the postulates and the method, only a certain number of possibilities exist; and these are actually and physically drawn in the making of a work of art. The drawing of such deductions may be an easy affair or a difficult one, a brief task or one of long duration. The determination of just what deductions may be drawn given the postulates and the method is not always so easy as it sounds. Only a genius of the stature of a J. S. Bach can tell exactly what variations a theme will lend itself to, and only a poet of the size of Dante can determine what events will be permitted to certain characters and scenes. The deductions may be drawn in a hurry or they may take years to work out. Voltaire's *Candide* was written in a few weeks, but Flaubert took many years to pare down the writing of *Madame Bovary*. Both works of art are of great value, and such value is not proportional in any way to the time spent on their composition.

Those who view logic in the old, narrow way experience

some difficulty in seeing any objective and actual physical action as related to propositions. The whole of logic is held by them to be identical with the logic of propositions. Of course, it is by propositions that we analyze logic. The business of logic as an abstract affair does not require any charades; we do not need to produce a boy holding a bird in order to explain for logical purposes what we mean when we say, 'The boy holds the bird,' though indeed such would be the actual reference. But when we deny the validity of the logical content of the actual boy actually holding the actual bird, we deny that our theoretical logic has any practical applications, *i.e.*, that logical propositions are true outside of the realm of theoretical logic itself. But assuredly it is so, else there would be no use to logic. Hence the theoretical deductions from the logical postulates and method adopted for the production of a given work of art are actually used in what we have termed the applications, which themselves therefore consist in actual deductions.

If an artist did not have a certain plan in mind, he could never execute a work of art. But what does it mean to have a 'plan in mind' if not the conception, however vague, of a set of postulates, a method, both theoretically held, and a determination to work them out in practice deductively? And of what use would the plan be were it not to be worked out in the objective and external world as a set of purposive actions? Any such purposive action, following a certain order and with a certain end in view, may be said to be a planned action. And where its postulates, method and aim include general propositions, it may be said to be deductive in nature. Hence the matter of applications, or in other words, the execution of a work of art, is primarily deductive.

(4) The conclusion of the artistic process consists in the

finished work of art together with its meaning. When the last application has been made, the work of art stands completed, a whole thing, destined perhaps to lead a life of its own in the social world. Its meaning may not be easy of access or of abstraction, yet it must exist.

Logically, the conclusion is the last deduction to be drawn. It must follow from the postulates, be made possible by the method, and be akin to the applications. In the novel it would be exemplified by the final unraveling of the plot. In sculpture, it would be those last, finishing touches from which the meaning of the whole often emerges. The conclusion of a work of art is hard to come by, for it is not constituted by the last note in a symphony or the last word in a play, but rather by the whole which the last parts complete. The situation is similar to that of a picture puzzle where the entire picture is meaningless until the very last piece has been put into place. It is *not* similar to a chain before the last link has been added. The conclusion of a work of art does not depend upon the most recent or the most advanced steps taken but upon *all* the steps taken. It is that for which the whole exists and not merely that which comes at the end. This is the most obvious in musical compositions, for assuredly the coda does not carry the meaning of the whole, which instead depends upon every part: upon the announcement of the theme, and upon each one of the variations. But the conclusions, despite this peculiarity which is one characteristic of all candidly axiological organizations, is deductive by nature since, though it follows from the whole rather than from the last part, it does, after all, follow logically—as an implication in the actual exemplification of a general proposition by an actual particular proposition.

IV

We have now considered the psychological tools with which the artist works, the psychological stages in the production of a work of art, and the logical analysis of the psychological process. We are obliged to add some final remarks on the process as a whole.

It will be remembered that we have observed four stages in the psychological process and also four stages of logical analysis. The question obviously arises of whether the four psychological stages are closely related to the four logical steps. The answer is that to some extent they are related, although the correspondence is not exactly one to one, as we might superficially be led to expect. The best explanation of the relationship will be given by comparing them in detail for points of similarity and difference.

The first pair to be compared, then, is: 'the reception of the data' (psychological) and 'the postulates' (logical). These are of course very close. The reception of the sense data from the objective and external world (which includes the artist's social environment as well as his physical, chemical and biological environment) carries in with it certain propositions which the artist henceforth holds in his psyche or unconscious to be true. This is another and longer way of saying that his beliefs come to him from the external world. To view them as postulates rather than as received data is to make the distinction between values and their logical analysis. The relationship is a very intimate one indeed, for the bonds between an axiological whole and its logical part are closer than those between things which are strongly similar.

The second pair to be compared is: 'the revision in the psyche' (psychological) and 'the adoption of a method'

(logical). The connection between them is not so obvious as it was between the previous ones. The confusion within the artist may be said to be a necessary concomitant of his search for a method, since here we see quite plainly that, while we have distinguished a method and the other postulates, there is no absolute division between them, and a method is an integral part of that which is to be accomplished by the method. When something definite emerges from the psychic chaos, it takes the form of the way in which the problem can be executed; the artist grasps suddenly not only what is to be done to produce a particular work of art but also how it is to be done. Hence the revision in the psyche and the adoption of a method are closely related, though not quite in the same way as the reception of the data was related to the postulates. For the revision in the psyche is the emotional turmoil from which the logical definiteness of the adopted method is produced.

The third pair to be compared is: 'the conscious reaction' (psychological) and 'the applications' (logical). The conscious reaction is what drives the artist to make the applications, which is only another way of saying that when the artist sees what is to be done he begins to do it. Consciousness, we might say, is the instrument which enables action to follow what in the content of the unconscious it is believed ought to be enacted. When the artist commences a work of art and proceeds with its execution, he does so because his beliefs as to what should be done and how to do it have risen to the level of awareness whereby he is enabled to do it. Thus the relationship between conscious reaction and applications is much the same as we found it to be between the revision in the psyche and the adoption of a

method; the former is the feeling from which the specific determination of the latter is produced.

The fourth and last pair to be compared is: 'the making of the object' (psychological) and 'the conclusion' (logical). The artist in making a work of art of course regards every part from the point of view of its contribution to the whole. Hence throughout his labors he manifests a constant concern for the finished product, which we have already noted logically to be the conclusion. In other words, the psychological processes which go on while the artist is actually occupied with the making of a work of art lead inevitably to that last deduction which we have termed the conclusion. Thus the relationship between the making of the object and the conclusion is primarily a consequential one.

We are now as a result of our studies in a position to understand the artistic imagination a little better. Some outstanding features immediately present themselves. One feature is that the artistic imagination does not depend on facts so much as it does on logic. Indeed it takes off from facts about things-as-they-are but soon departs for the realm of things-as-they-ought-to-be or could-be. The case for the artist rather than the seeker after facts is, paradoxically, well presented by—of all people—the historian, Herodotus, when he remarks that: "As for the tale of Abaris, who is said to have been a Hyperborean, and to have gone with his arrow all round the world without once eating, I shall pass it by in silence. This much, however, is clear: if there are Hyperboreans, there must also be Hypernotians." (Bk. IV.) The facts of the artistic imagination consist in whatever have been accepted as postulates, whether factually true or not—usually not. Once the postulates have been accepted and a method adopted along with them, the artist must follow his logic

which is no less inexorable for not being based on facts. The world of the artist is not only a never-never land, it is also an if-then region; it is conditional and hypothetical, so that one thing will follow if another be accepted.

Another feature of the artistic imagination is that it is no less imaginative for being logical. We are enabled to analyze the wildest products of the imagination because of the logic that is in them; but that logic did not ever prevent them from being wild. The affective part of imagination is a value affair, an affair of feeling, insight, emotion. The logical part is one of analysis, element, relation. There is no conflict between them; each complements and needs the other and each makes the other possible. Conflict arises only when it is supposed that either could exist without the other or could take the place of the other; and this conflict chiefly occurs in theory which is erroneous and in the studied application of erroneous theory according to a fixed and conscious formula, more rarely in intuitively guided practice.

From a functional point of view, perhaps the most significant feature of the artistic imagination is that it consists in a kind of aesthetic judgment. The artist is required to do more than merely to grasp new possibilities of relations and values; he must in the act of imagining seize upon *important* new possibilities of relations and values, that is, upon right relations and meaningful values. The artist could, conceivably, imagine anything. But the situation does not long remain one involving such vagueness of generality. For he does in fact imagine something. This something which he imagines entails a selection from among all the possible things which he could have imagined. He selects the one he does on the basis of aesthetic preference: it is better for his artistic purposes than

were others not selected. Hence imagination involves judgment.

The field of application in this connection has of course its own natural limits. These are set up for it by the distinction between form and content. Too great an emphasis upon content leads to sentimentality in art and to a kind of formlessness which approaches the limits of not-art. Undue emphasis on method may lead to a rigidity and even to a superficiality which approaches the same confines. The absolute effort at abstraction leads toward a content-less art. The absolute effort at slavish reproduction leads to a pure representation which must compete with mechanical reproduction by the camera. Between these extremes lies symbolism, a method which employs both degrees of representation and abstraction but achieves a qualitative symbolism which is more artistic than either extreme. The paintings of Braque and Miro are examples of extreme abstraction; the sculptures of Jo Davidson tend in the direction of extreme representation; while the canvases of Cézanne furnish instances of the successful performances of the method of symbolism. The method of symbolism employs the artistic imagination upon a sound basis of perception plus imagination, without the loss of logic and aim. This means that the aesthetic judgment is best able to fulfill its requirement of due proportionality in the production of works of art. If this last statement be interpreted as a defense of academic work in art or as rejection of all innovation, then it is being misunderstood. Due proportionality does not mean conservatism, or the golden mean conceived as a middle-of-the-road, compromise policy. It involves giving the imagination full sway but within the wide limits of logic rather than of some more restrictive formula.

The proposition that the artistic imagination consists in a

kind of aesthetic judgment has important implications, so far as the nature of the psychology of aesthetics is concerned. The act of judging is subjective but that which is judged must be objective, although this has from time to time been denied. Spinoza, for instance, was explicit in asserting that he did not attribute to nature either beauty or deformity, order or confusion. But if artistic imagining involves judging, then it cannot be true, as he goes on to assert, that "only in relation to our imagination can things be called beautiful or ugly, well-ordered or confused." The position upon which aesthetic judging depends claims, to the contrary, that only in relation to the imagination do things make the *impression* of beauty or ugliness, orderliness or confusion, and that their condition of actually being so, whichever they are, does not depend in any way upon the impression they make. The artistic imagination selects from among possible things according to their aesthetic worth, and this involves beyond a doubt some sort of aesthetic judgment.

The impact of the world upon the artist stimulates him to the production of works of art. After the process has been gone through, there is a change to be observed all around. The artist is no longer the same but older and wiser and emotionally a little more used up as well as a little more educated. And the world is the better for containing a new element which is the work of art. Since the work of art did not exist before its making except as elements and a possibility, it is something new. But in a sense also, what is discovered is not new; what is new is the discovery. Human 'creations' are after all only discoveries. Thus the artist is a pioneer, and his field of pioneering is that possible world of what could exist. We can only hope to find what

we can suppose there could be. The greatest artist is he who looks for and finds the greatest beauty.

Culturally speaking, art is an all-or-nothing venture. It cannot be done halfway. The fairly good artist is not, like the fairly good business man, doing something fairly well. Art will not stand for compromise; the man who temporizes is badly hurt and has nothing to show for his pains. Bad art, even fairly bad art, is much worse than no art at all. The artist cannot approach his task, one might say his dedication, with any reservations. If what he has to give to art is not enough, he is the loser and there is no gainer. He has to have something important to give and he has to give it all. He must be prepared to give everything and to expect nothing in return, on the assumption that if he receives nothing it will be well.

It is a truism that an artist cannot hope to be great who lacks technique. Art has a technical side, which includes some kind of acquired predisposition plus a long apprenticeship to the method and materials of art. But the greatness of an artist is measured by the breadth of his interest more than by the excellence of his technique. Bad technique can be partly overlooked, limited interest never can be. This is the main difference between a major and a minor artist. Given the same technique, the major artist is the one who concerns himself with cosmical themes, as for example in the plays of Aeschylus. The minor artist is more parochial in the selection of his thematical material and is frequently preoccupied with matters of style, as for instance in the novels of Hemingway. By this criterion, Chekhov, for instance, verges on greatness, Shakespeare, like the Greek dramatists, achieves it, while Flaubert and Dickens fall short of it. Breadth of interest is closely related to that concern on the part of the

artist for the qualities and form of the external world which do not concern him so far as his survival and physical well-being are at stake and the survival and well-being of his family, neighbors and social group. The artist, in other words, has both interest in and love of the external world, but for its own sake and not for what it can do for him. This concern and interest and love is what we have earlier termed 'superfluous caring.' The hallmark of the true artist is his superfluous caring.

What it means to be an artist is evident in the personality of an old artist, a man who has, so to speak, been filled up and emptied many times, worn out with superfluous caring. Temporarily, however, the psychic figure of the artist is not improved by giving birth to a work of art. The chaos which remains in the psyche of the artist is left over, like afterbirth, in the making of a perfect thing. Even if he is a great artist and well recognized as such, this does not alter the internal circumstances which accompany the production of a work of art.

But the fate of an artist, so far as external circumstances are concerned, does not depend upon the value of his work so much as it does upon the recognition of that value by his contemporaries. If he is exploiting the values which have received favorable current regard, he will be applauded; if he is celebrating values which have been received with favor in the past and which have retained a sort of sentimental and nostalgic worth according to current evaluations, he will be applauded; but if he is attempting to actualize values which have not as yet been even recognized in current evaluations, the chances are that he will be either ridiculed or ignored—preferably the former, though probably the latter, for in the case of the former any kind of attention may turn

eventually to understanding and appreciation. The nature of the public reception of the work has of course its due effect upon the psychological makeup of the artist himself. He may become disproportionately discouraged or egocentric and arrogant. Since contemporary recognition of great art is far from the rule, he is more apt to be discouraged; and many artists are given to much complaining about their unhappy lot. The predicament of the living artist is that of any reformer, for the artist, in his desires and efforts to depict things other and better than they are, that is, as they ought to be and could be, is a reformer.

The artist is apt to dramatize and overemphasize the tragedy and pathos of his role. But any idealist who at the same time must live in the world is in a sense in the position of cutting the ground from under his own feet: he depends upon social relations in order to continue his existence so long as he must eat, wear clothes and live under some kind of shelter; and yet he remains discontented with the imperfect society which produces such things for him. So far as the good of the artist and of everyone else is concerned, however, this is to be swallowed and borne, not dwelt on in any self-pitying way. The artist in most cases does lead a thankless existence; but despite the truth of that circumstance, his whinnying still has a disgusting sound. He should and must learn to bear his slights, his pains, his neglect, in silence, in dignified silence. Even if he knows in his heart that the silence which greets his work is like that of an unpaid debt and will probably not continue after his death and the subsequent recognition of his work, he can do little except bear it—for bear it he must if it is not to weigh him down and crush out of him his art-producing capabilities.

The artist has an important role to play in society. He

himself lies directly in the path of the route which nature takes to produce a work of art. Hence his psychological faculties, which must be attuned to the sensitive and yet powerful task of furthering the artistic progress of nature, are complicated in the extreme. It is unlikely that these faculties have been fully explained here, but if something of their peculiarities has been laid bare so that further investigators may have a clue, the attempt to describe them has not been undertaken in vain.

Chapter VII

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ART APPRECIATION

WORKS of art have two kinds of uses, individual and social. The social uses of art are concerned with the relations between the institution of art and other institutions, and will be treated elsewhere. Here we shall be concerned with the individual use, which is the apprehension, enjoyment and appreciation of art.

The apprehension of the value of art depends upon the ability to comprehend works of art; the enjoyment and appreciation, upon the ability to feel and to understand the values involved. These propositions mean that we are in effect dealing with three separate elements in the process of using a work of art. We are dealing with the work of art itself, together with its aesthetic value and logical structure. We are dealing with the way in which the work of art has an effect upon the spectator. Finally, we are dealing with the psychological processes of the spectator which take place when the work of art exercises its effect. Of course, in the process of the appreciation of art there is no such separation of elements but all three are fused in a single function. We shall

come shortly to an examination of that function and to an analysis of its separate stages, but before we can do so we must devote a few sentences to each of the three elements in order to understand better what it is that is being fused in the actual operation of the appreciation of art.

A work of art is an independent existent in the actual world, having its own value and its own structure for which it is no longer responsible to the artist, although the exercise of his activities upon inert material originally brought it into existence. It has its value, which consists in the qualitative aspect of the perfect relation of parts to whole; and it has its logic, which consists in the postulates, method, deductions and conclusion of the way in which it is made and actually exists. The postulates are leading principles, primitive ideas which are expressed in the work of art. The method is the way in which the postulates have been applied. The deductions are the actual properties of the work of art, the actual applications of the postulates according to the method. The conclusion is the final meaning of the work of art as a whole, what has been arrived at terminally by applying the postulates according to the method. All art is affirmative in its major postulates irrespective of whether its method utilizes identity or difference. The work of art itself, actual or possible, is central to all aesthetic questions, to the whole theory of aesthetics, to the artist, to the appreciator and to the critic. It is that from which all of the functions of art, all aesthetic processes, start. But as an actually existing thing, having its own value and its own structure, and hence its own relations with other items in the actual world, it does not depend upon anything else. For the work of art is a thing existing separately both from process and from person, and

is the initiative focus of processes involving aesthetic elements and effects upon persons.

We have noted that aesthetic value inheres in the work of art itself. From there, it has its effect upon the spectator. Or rather, it has its effect by means of a perspective which the spectator occupies, and through the perspective, upon the spectator. An interpreter, for instance, an actor or singer, is a kind of living social perspective on works of art. The effect of the work of art upon the spectator is the relation between them in its forceful aspect, and the energies and attention of the spectator who attends to a work of art are literally compelled by this force. All forceful relations have their logical aspect. The relation between work of art and spectator on its logical side is asymmetric, non-transitive, irreflexive and connected. Let A stand for the work of art, R for the relation between work of art and spectator, and C for the spectator. AC is asymmetric because $R(AC)$ does not imply $R(CA)$. The dyadic relation AC is non-transitive because transitivity does not apply to dyadic relation. The relation R is irreflexive because R does not apply to itself. Lastly, AC is connected because $R(AC)$ is true.

In the meaning of a work of art as a natural object, it may be said that the total artistic process is as follows. The natural environment works on the artist to produce the work of art. The work of art is interpreted by the performer and appreciated by the spectator. Or: environment→artist→work of art→interpreter→spectator. In order properly to understand the process of the appreciation of art, we must call upon our imagination to aid us in assuming the perspective of the work of art and to aid us further in viewing the spectator or appreciator from that perspective. In the *Ion,* Plato gives an image of rings to illustrate the process. He said there is

a series of rings through which the power of the Heraclean lodestone is transmitted; of this series, the poet is the first ring, the rhapsode or actor the middle ring and the spectator the last ring, but it is the god who draws the souls of men wherever he pleases by means of the rings.[21] Plato spoke of the poet but neglected to mention the poem, although of course he had the same direction in mind. From the artist to the work of art is a process of discovery. From the work of art to the spectator is a process of effect. The work of art is the end of the first process and the beginning of the second.

In discussing the operation of appreciation we have thus far spoken as though the spectator were a passive recipient at one end of the process. In the sense in which the process involves both work of art and spectator this is true. The spectator, so far as his powers permit him to be sensitive to what he apprehends, is helpless before a work of art and must receive whatever impress the work of art makes upon him. But this passive reception is only the first stage, though it is not a simple stage any more than a camera is a simple mechanism, as those who have studied the chemistry of the photographic process will be glad to explain. Other stages involve the ability of the spectator to appreciate, understand and enjoy what he has apprehended. These involve advanced, complicated and active rather than passive psychological processes. The appreciator may not be as much of a discoverer as the artist is. The relation between artist and work of art is one-one; while the relation between work of art and appreciator is one-many; hence the appreciator may not be as rare and as valuable as the artist. But individually he is as complicated, and, collectively, he is as indis-

[21] 535-6.

pensable to the completion of the artistic process from discovery to effect.

We have traced the process of the appreciation of art from its inception in the work of art to the threshold of individual appreciation. Let us now penetrate further into the psychological processes which take place in the spectator when the work of art has once pre-empted his attention. The stages of the psychological process of art appreciation are four in number. These are: (1) the perception of the object, (2) the division in the psyche, (3) the conscious reaction, and (4) the production of enjoyment.

(1) We have already given some space to a discussion of the passive role which the subject plays in the perception of the art object. Peirce often characterized the actuality of actual things by their quality of resistance. A spectator is not compelled to look at a work of art, let us say at the portrait of a young girl, since he is always free to shut his eyes or to look at something else; but when he does look at the portrait, he is compelled to see it for what it is, namely the portrait of a young girl. If it is sufficiently pictorial, he will be unable to read it as a railroad train, a book or an oyster. The perceiving subject is, so to speak, helpless in the hands of the data. He must receive them so long as, and to the extent to which, he chooses to attend to them. The power of the perceiving subject lies in his ability to select what he shall attend to, not in what he can make of the objects which finally do receive his attention.

So far as perception goes, the external world is given; and no amount of perceiving will change it. What can be changed is the segment perceived, and thus the change here involves an exchange of one segment for another. Hence the problem of the perceiving subject at this first stage in the process of

art appreciation is: to what segment of existence shall he attend? This might more purposively be worded: under the influence of what objects shall he place himself? This question has already been partly answered by the art appreciator with the statement: under objects of art. But there is still a further question of selectivity: under *what* objects of art? Presumably under a selection of the objects of art which are available to his perception. No individual can experience all objects of art but only those which are part of his available environment. Of those which are so available, he will like some and dislike others, and only the ones he likes will carry him further in the process of art appreciation. But all of them that he experiences, both those that he likes and those he dislikes, will make their impression upon him willy-nilly through his perception and by their resistance to chance so far as that perception is concerned.

(2) After the data have been perceived, they are passed on to the psyche. The psyche, or the soul, is the 'unconscious mind' where the beliefs of the individual are received and stored until they issue forth again as the springs of action. The psyche is a field of intellectual and emotional activity but one which lies below the surface of consciousness. When the perceived data reach the psyche they are broken up into their component parts; these are the rational and the qualitative. That is to say, the content and structure of what has been perceived is separated. These elements are then related and compared with relevant material already existing in the psyche. In this way the new data are assimilated and the new relations and values enabled to take hold.

The passage of the perceived data of the art object through the conscious mind is a definite fact. It is not possible to perceive data without the aid of perception, and perception

involves attention or awareness. We deliberately attend to the data which we perceive and this means that the conscious mind is engaged. But the activity here is of a superficial type. For the conscious mind at this stage of the process merely acts as a receiving station and admittance center for the psyche. What is received is passed on to the psyche, where the proper psychical operation takes place.

The psychical operation of dividing the received data into its components of rational structure and qualitative content makes it possible to make further use of the new material. This further use consists in relating the new material to old beliefs. The psyche, we have noted, is a storehouse of beliefs. These beliefs, many of which have never reached the level of the conscious mind, are largely social. They are the cumulative sum of what has been learned by the individual in the course of his life, and they contain everything that his environment has been able to compel him to accept as true. The core of the psyche would naturally, then, be the beliefs as to what is most widely true, or in other words the accepted cosmology of the social group to which the individual belongs. This has been termed elsewhere the 'implicit dominant ontology.' Now, a belief consists in an idea or accepted proposition together with an emotional attitude engendered by the acceptance of the proposition. With these parts the components of the received data interact, the structure of the received data being compared for identity or difference with the accepted propositions and the content with the emotional attitude. The former may be termed unconscious inference and the latter an unconsciously vague sense of comfort (or discomfort). The comfort or discomfort may be better described as a vague feeling of adjustment or of disturbance at the unconscious level. The results of the comparison con-

sist in a further belief (or disbelief), made up of a new accepted proposition (which may be either positive or negative) and a new emotional attitude of like or dislike.

(3) It is with this further belief, consisting of novel accepted proposition and fresh emotional attitude, that the third step is concerned. This third step is the conscious reaction to the perceived, and received, data as these transformed data issue upward from the psyche into the level of consciousness. The spectator is aware of the work of art as the object in the foreground of his awareness, and the intensity and complication of this fact depend only upon the degree of his ability to think and feel. There is little doubt that some persons are more aware than others; the ability to feel deeply, less deeply or more deeply varies from individual to individual. In addition, thinking aids awareness in the direction of abstraction and complication. The most keenly aware are those who are self-aware, that is, aware of their own awareness. Thus the spectator who is aware of his own awareness of an object of art which he may be enjoying is one who is in a position to take the measure of his own enjoyment and hence to hazard some guess as to the value of the work of art by means of an evaluation made through an estimation of his own reactions.

The rational component of belief when this component reaches the stage of awareness does more than complicate the process; it also serves to intensify it. The understanding of an accepted proposition where that proposition is a component part of a new belief (or disbelief) is important in throwing light upon the meaning of the whole belief. In other words and more specifically, to understand a work of art that we have seen or heard is to see or hear it better. The appreciation of art is aided greatly by the understanding

of art. Not to understand often means not to have the right feelings, while understanding allows the feelings to flow. How often have we disliked a new work of art, particularly one involving an original point of view or a radical innovation of method, at first sight or hearing, until we have learned to comprehend its meaning and intention? And further, how often has this comprehension led to a change of feelings and the evolution from dislike to like? The rational study of art is rejected by living artists who are prejudiced because they know so well that it leads away from emotional attitudes and toward analysis. But what they fail to understand is that while this contention is justified, no harm and indeed much good is done; for the analysis which leads away from emotional attitudes eventually returns to it with increased emotional power. The study of internal combustion engines will not take one anywhere, yet the outcome of such study will more than repay the time spent on it. He who leaves the enjoyment of art for the analysis of art will return with the capacity for greater enjoyment. Hence work devoted to accepted propositions will be repaid in intensified emotions.

The spectator who has learned to appreciate a great work of art has suffered a psychic change. There is a startled suddenness connected with a new appreciation, an exalted emotion and a sense of elation. What we mean when we say that the psyche is affected by any profound experience with a work of art is analogous to what the Stoics said, according to Sextus Empiricus,[22] when they asserted that presentations are alterations of the regent part of the soul, given the extended circumstance of the extraordinary intensity of such a presentation as a great work of art.

[22] *Against the Logicians*, I, 237.

When we come to the examination of the novel emotional attitude engendered by the experience of the new work of art, we find something more complicated. If it is true that art reveals what ought-to-be through the use of what-is, if, in other words, art is a study of possible perfections founded on the experience of imperfections as these exist in the actual world, then the fresh emotional attitude called forth by the experience with the new work of art requires the employment of imagination. It is the imperfections of the actual world which move the artist emotionally to produce a spectacle of perfection, and this spectacle of perfection is the work of art. The imagination of the spectator stimulates the ambitions of the artist and pursues it into a possible world of perfections. Thus there can be no true appreciation of art without some imagination, and the spectator is to this extent himself something of an artist. The artist guides us through the strange territory which he has brought forth out of his vision and it requires some effort to follow after him.

The role of the imagination as it is in the act of appreciation of the spectator is not the same as it was in the making of the original discovery by the artist. In some ways it is narrower and in other ways more difficult. The task of the spectator's imagination is narrower because while that of the artist was free and to some extent arbitrary, that of the spectator is not. The spectator's imagination has its path laid down for it by what has already been done in the specific work of art. The artist was free in the making of the work of art to interpret what he found of interest in the actual world. The spectator endeavoring to appreciate the completed work of art must grasp what he finds there and employ his imagination only on that given object. Hence

the difficulty in the way of the spectator, who must discipline his imagination in confining its activities to such a narrow field, and yet call upon it for efforts which reach at least the peak reached by the artist in the work of art which he has made and which now stands available to appreciation.

In the appreciation of a work of art, the mistake is sometimes made of endeavoring to understand and to follow the subjective intentions and designs of the artist rather than his objective accomplishment in the work of art. The former is a practical task in introspective psychology as this may be attempted in connection with the mind of an artist, the latter is an essay at the understanding of a work of art. The former method leads backward toward the sociology of the artist, to the tracing of the influences of the life and times of the artist which went to influence his artistic bent. The latter method chiefly leads toward the greater enjoyment of art.

The difficult task of the imagination of the artist, then, a difficulty which the artist does not have to face, is that it involves an act of empathy, and it is an empathy which must go not for the mind of the artist but for the internal meaning, the nature, of the work of art itself. The task of the spectator who would be an appreciator is that he must 'think himself into' the work of art, see the world, so to speak, from inside the work of art and as the work of art sees it. This is what Ruskin called the "theoretic faculty." He must feel himself at one with the work of art, perform an act of *einfühling,* that is, imaginatively project himself into or momentarily identify himself with the work of art. The effort adds an additional task to the imagination of the spectator, a task which the imagination of the artist, whose product the work of art is, does not have. The empathetic

act is the last step of the third stage, and leads directly to the liking of art if it succeeds or the disliking if it fails.

The use of the term, empathy, in this connection is to be carefully distinguished from the way in which it was originally employed by Titchener as an approximate translation of what was meant by the *einfühling* of Wundt and his school. The Wundtian psychologistic metaphysics is entirely subjective and envisages the center of the aesthetic value in the emotions of the appreciator. Whatever empathy takes place is a matter of identification with the object, an identification which is, however, of importance only to the subject for the emotions which it arouses in him. The conception set forth here by contrast recognizes the subjective act of empathy but regards it as an identification with the value of the object and hence as an effort toward a true aesthetic value which resides outside the subject and in the actual world. The empathetic activity of the subject is not intended to diffuse the object with aesthetic value but rather to apprehend the aesthetic value which resides in the object. Despite the fact that both interpretations recognize the activity of empathy on the part of the spectator of art, so far as effect is concerned, and implications in general of a philosophical nature, there is literally all the difference in the world between them. The spectator of a work of art gets enjoyment from his experience with the work of art, but he gets it only as a by-product of a kind of sympathy with the work of art, a recognition of its value by means of an identification with it, by sharing for a moment its perspective; and this sharing is what is meant here by empathy.

(4) To dislike a work of art is to fail in the effort at appreciation, but to like it is to succeed. The liking of art can best be described emotionally as the enjoyment of art.

In the enjoyment of art, the psychological faculties which we have been describing come into full play and fit into place. The separate elements merge once more into a whole in which the parts are no longer discernible; accepted propositions disappear into emotional attitudes in a comprehensible whole which is no longer divisible but is one thing: the complete and satisfactory feeling of pleasure which the work of art now yields. It has a carry-over which often remains with the spectator when he is no longer in the presence of the work of art that occasioned it. Indeed it frequently tends to grow and diffuse. The full effect of a great symphony, say, Beethoven's Fifth, or a great novel, say Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov,* is not felt until some while after the music has been heard or the pages read. Thus it is an emotion which must be dealt with on its own grounds, irrespective of the object which occasioned the emotion or of the individual experiencing it.

Emotion involves the whole person, a stirring up of the entire organism. It is a psychic wave of affection initiated at some particular level within the human organism but having reverberations which are felt at every level: physical, chemical, biological and psychological. Enjoyment is the overt response of the organism to an object which is beneficial. The feeling of pleasure is this emotion felt at the lower levels, while the feeling of enjoyment is the same but felt at the higher. Now, the enjoyment of art differs from other and cruder types of enjoyment in being more diffused and more disinterested. The aesthetic emotion, as it may be called, differs qualitatively from cruder types of enjoyment but there is no sharp line distinguishing the one from the other, only an imperceptible shading. The aesthetic emotion is more diffused in that it engages the higher centers

as well as the lower, while crude forms of enjoyment engage only the lower. Crude enjoyment tends to use an object in a personal and selfish way. We enjoy good food, strong drink, physical exertion. In a higher sense of enjoyment, we enjoy friendship, accomplishment, pleasant surroundings. And in a still higher sense we enjoy sexual love, religious worship, works of art. But the enjoyment of works of art differs from most types of enjoyment in that it asks nothing and gives everything. We are simply and solely gladdened by the spectacle of the efflux which emanates from the perfect relations of parts to a whole within a given actual object, and we do not feel called upon in any way to do anything about it for ourselves. Aesthetic emotion is akin to true love because they share a common objectivity, detachment, disinterested concern, superfluous caring. The aesthetic emotion lives in the golden and reflected glow of superfluous caring.

In the foregoing analysis, it must be remembered, the objective view of the aesthetic value of art is taken. One incidental purpose of an objective interpretation of aesthetic value is to show that it makes a plausible subjective, if adjunctive, explanation possible. The subjective interpretation or the relative interpretation, whereby aesthetic value is thought to inhere in the subject or to spring into existence as a product of the relation between spectator and work of art, on the other hand seems incapable of yielding a plausible objective explanation.

Let us consider that a man is looking at a painting and that he likes it. What is the source of his enjoyment? Obviously it exists somewhere in the relation between the painting and himself. But *what* is he enjoying, the painting, the relation or himself? It is assuredly true that, as we say, he

is enjoying himself; but at least it must be admitted that he is enjoying himself in a peculiar way, a way which is afforded by the painting, for he attends to the painting while he does so; and in the absence of the painting the enjoyment, or at least this peculiar enjoyment, fades after a while when he attends to something other than the painting. Thus it is fair to conclude that so far as this occasion is concerned he is not enjoying *merely* himself. But he cannot be said to be enjoying the relation between the painting and himself because he does not in his apprehension or enjoyment distinguish between those entities which we shall term respectively, 'the painting and himself' and 'the painting.' That is to say, in the act of looking at the painting and liking it, he does not distinguish between the painting he likes and his liking of the painting. Hence he cannot be said to be enjoying the relation between the painting and himself any more than he is enjoying the painting. But if this is true, and if it is further true, as we said, that in the absence of the painting the enjoyment fades after a while when he has ceased to attend to it or to the memory of it, then it must be the painting that he is enjoying and neither solely himself nor the painting and himself.

A study which is devoted to the psychological processes of the appreciation of art can hardly be said to have overlooked the subject. The orientation is objective with respect to the real value of the object of art, but the viewpoint of the subject must not be forgotten. Only this one aspect of the problem has not yet been discussed, and it consists in the relation which holds between spectator and art object, the relative question. This we shall find can be solved by the particular theory of perspectives of which we took notice at the beginning of this chapter.

If aesthetic value inheres in the work of art and is made available to the spectator through the relation between them, what is the nature of this relation? A view of anything may be said to be a perspective on it. But the appreciation of art is neither a naive nor a novel performance. The spectator comes to a work of art as just what he is. And whoever he is he stands in the midst of a social milieu. He looks at the work of art with the spectacles provided for him not only by his own peculiarities as an individual but by all the prejudices peculiar to his date and place, by the implicit dominant ontology of his social group which affects his psyche, by the waves of evaluation from the atmosphere of opinion which alter from moment to moment, by all the prejudices which he holds and by the abilities which he possesses. When we ask what a man thinks of a piece of sculpture, of a ballet or of a building, what we are actually asking is what a particular work of art seems from the standpoint of a particular set of beliefs. We are asking, in other words, how the work of art looks from a particular perspective. Now, perspectives change from individual to individual, and from moment to moment for the same individual. Nevertheless, there must be overlappings or there could be no agreement whatsoever between individuals concerning what lies within a perspective. When an individual experiences a work of art and gets a certain meaning, a certain value, a certain enjoyment from it, that is because he occupies a certain perspective with respect to it. His perspective is partly determined by himself, his personal history, and in a larger and more inclusive sense by the implicit dominant ontology of the culture of which he is a part, the latter a factor which we noted in operation in the previous chapter in which we discussed the psychology of the artist. His viewpoint, how-

ever personal, is taken from a perspective; and the perspective as well as the work of art would continue to exist even if he did not. An unoccupied perspective is still a perspective. The work of art which is not being experienced by anyone is not being actively *appreciated* as a work of art. But this does not prevent it from *remaining* a work of art. The capability of experiencing it still exists potentially, for the work of art is still having its effect upon the perspective from which it is potentially capable of being appreciated. Thus anyone moving into such a perspective would immediately begin to appreciate the work of art.

Thus it is not on the relation between the spectator and the work of art that the aesthetic value depends for possibilities of appreciation, but rather on the relation between the work of art and the perspective on the work of art. For the purposes of knowledge-relations and of value-feelings, there is a sense in which we can talk about the human individual as a perspective. His knowledge of art, and his experience with particular works of art from which he has derived aesthetic value in the form of feeling, have given him a background from which further appreciation and enjoyment of art is made easier. This background equips him with a perspective on works of art. But he is not a moving perspective except in the sense in which his knowledge constitutes some of the elements which are found in the perspective of many works of art. For a perspective in the sense here intended closely resembles a physical perspective in being indelibly associated with the object. The perspective of the art object is part of it and is that which enables it to have an aesthetic value in the epistemological sense even when there is no spectator to appreciate or enjoy it. The knowledge and experience of the spectator, let us say for

instance of an art connoisseur (not one who has learned to compile his *sottisier* from any art catalogue either of conventional work or of more 'advanced' work considered as a whole and categorically), constitutes not so much a moving perspective as a sort of specific sensitivity, the sensitivity to beauty wherever and whenever encountered. This sensitivity, it so happens, operates quite naturally more often and more easily upon objects of art than upon anything else. We must wait for sunsets to occur, we are obliged to take long journeys in order to view mountain heights; but the paintings stay in the museums or on our own walls.

The sensitivity to beauty, or as it has so often been called the sense of beauty, operates in conjunction with the beautiful and is a recognition and reception of objective beauty. Beauty, it will be remembered, is the qualitative aspect of the perfect relation of parts to whole in any given object. The sense of beauty, then, must be some kind of subjective counterpart of beauty, or in other words the impress which beauty makes upon the person occupying the perspective from which beauty can be apprehended and appreciated. The sense of beauty is a sense of the qualitative aspect of proportion. It is distinguishable from what has been called a sense of proportion in that the sense of proportion is a recognition of the *relations* of proportion, whereas the sense of beauty is an apprehension of the *values* of proportion. The sense of proportion is analytical, the sense of beauty qualitative. The sense of beauty is the special ability to feel the qualitative aspect of the perfection relations of parts to whole within any given object. Thus the sense of beauty is a sense of harmony. The sense of beauty is a frank recognition of what makes an impression upon the person standing in the proper perspective to enable him to apprehend

and appreciate what is beautiful. It involves a receiving mechanism attuned to the nature of that which it is intended to register, not by being similar to it in structure but by being put together in such a way as to make possible the reception of the effects of the beautiful object, the recognition of those effects for what they are, the apprehension, the appreciation and the enjoyment of them.

Even an objective theory, then, can affirm the existence of a *sense* of beauty, provided that sense be defined as employed in the apprehension of an objective state of affairs. Of course, such a sense must have subjective roots as well as objective grounds. The sense of beauty is a true sense but higher than the primary psychological senses, such as the sense of touch, smell or sight. When we admire or enjoy a work of art to the fullest, we feel it in every fiber of our being. The feeling of beauty may not be as intense as an orgasm but it has as wide a physiological spread and it has a wider temporal spread. Thus far its physiological foundations are undeniable even though they remain unanalyzed. The feeling of beauty is akin to the feelings of love and holiness, all three of which in their highest manifestations are probably aspects of the same awareness. For to recognize the beauty of an object, whether that object be a natural phenomenon such as a sunset, or a work of art such as a painting of a sunset, is to some extent to love it and to hold it as a symbol of the worshipful.

The evaluation of beautiful things is the problem chiefly of taste and judgment in art matters. By taste, of course, is meant the ability to make instinctively valid aesthetic judgments. One who possesses taste in the arts is one who is able to apprehend, appreciate and enjoy great works of art by being drawn toward them through sympathetic preference.

Taste constitutes an immediate and spontaneous response to the reception through the sensibilities of an objective value (or disvalue). All men have good or bad taste, *i.e.*, they all know what they like or dislike. The qualitative responses of all men are made immediately, but some judgments are better than others. This is because some men have knowledge of what they are judging while others have not. The feelings are immediate but they are not for that reason irrational. All feeling responses are based upon an anterior rationality. The responses of men with knowledge are apt to be better than those of men without. There is a halfway stage of knowledge, of course, where no knowledge, that is to say no half-baked training and indifferent though disciplined learning, is better than a little. But this is no argument against knowledge, it is only an argument against what we may call halfway knowledge, the kind of learning which substitutes literalness for an instinctive kind of native judgment and taste. Knowledge, it is true, is all acquired, but some men have a greater capacity for its acquisition than others, and not all knowledge is acquired consciously or in a formal way. But irrespective of how the knowledge is acquired, it furnishes a strong basis for taste. The man, for instance, who had a thorough familiarity with the form of the fugue would be in a better position to trust his feelings with respect to the judgment of new fugues than the man who had not. The basis of taste is important, just as the rational basis of all qualitative response is important, for the basis governs both the type of response and its validity to a considerable extent. Yet it must be remembered that all qualitative response, and taste in particular, is necessarily spontaneous and unrehearsed.

From the social point of view, taste marks the individual finding his way among artistic objects, feeling his way in

his culture. Various attempts have been made to get at the true meaning of beauty through a consensus of taste. This may have its value in a suggestive way, for it may furnish us with leads toward further investigations of an objective nature. But as a method of determining the nature of beauty it is worthless and even misleading. If beauty is not subjective, the study of it as though it were cannot be very helpful. The consensus method is not very valuable in the study of taste, either, except as taste functions in a cross-section of space and time. We may learn from a statistical investigation what the undergraduates of Yale University, the female population of Emporia, Kansas, or the citizens of Rye, New York, think is beautiful on the morning of December 8, 1949, more specifically, which of several colored shapes one of these groups thinks is the most pleasing; but their taste changes, too, and they might have rendered a different verdict that same afternoon or another day, just as the broader population, of which the groups named represent samples, might change from time to time in its standards of taste.

Taste is a social as well as an individual affair, however, and the taste of the one is governed by, but also contributes to, the evaluation which is made up by, the taste of the many. It has been demonstrated time and again that large social groups can be as erroneous in their judgment of works of art as can individuals. There is no counting how many times new works of art have been condemned almost unanimously by contemporaries, only to become recognized by later generations as having great aesthetic value. But the fact that social groups like individuals can err in judgments of art does not mean that there is not some movement toward the appreciation of value. The relations between social psy-

chology and art appreciation must remain a statistical theory until some cause can be shown. Undoubtedly, there have been great works of art which were born to blush unseen, while others, recognized in their time, have since been derogated, forgotten or lost. Undoubtedly, a high value has been temporarily assigned to works of art which have been later judged as having little if any aesthetic value. Undoubtedly, much hardship is worked in individual cases of artists or of works of art which have failed of proper recognition and been neglected past hope of recovery. But despite these shortcomings in true evaluation, the probability is that there is a statistical tendency toward the approximation of the appreciation of great art, provided a large enough population be taken into account. Probably, all evaluations tend to approximate the values at which they aim, given a long enough time, which only means given a sufficiently large enough number of instances. The Greek paintings of Polygnotus and Apelles have been lost, but enough people have recognized the high aesthetic value of the sculptures of Phidias for there to be little doubt remaining as to the accuracy of the appreciation.

The statistical probability of the tendency toward the appreciation of great art has not yet been accurately gauged in percentages and will not be until sufficient masses of data are made available. It is unreasonable to expect that either the major artist or his work will achieve the deserved recognition and consequent social eminence. The statistical method is incapable of predicting what will happen in a single instance. To believe that a great work of art is absolutely sure to be given its proper appreciation is to accept a fatalistic determinism with regard to the course of actual existence, for which there is not a shred of genuine evidence.

Chance is real in the actual world, and no reckoning with existence that does not take it into account is worth anything. But the great artist can lean on his social faith in the knowledge that there is a tendency toward the dealing of justice in the majority of instances. The chances are that his great work will receive great recognition—although of course it may not. And he can have faith in progress, that the appreciation of art tends to improve; and in this sense progress is more than possible, it is likely.

The fact that objective beauty cannot be measured subjectively does not mean that beauty cannot be measured, or that some approach to it could not be obtained even subjectively. We simply lack the necessary data at present. For instance, given a painting seen by a man, we could tell the value of the painting from the judgment passed on it by the man provided we knew enough about the man, but this knowledge would have to be complete and exhaustive; it would have to include the whole of the knowledge maintained as beliefs in his psyche, and everything concerning him which might govern his opinions, such as physical, chemical, biological and psychological peculiarities. Theoretically, it might be possible to obtain such a complete schedule of knowledge; but practically for the present it is impossible. Therefore a shorter approach might be to go directly to the object itself in order to obtain some knowledge of its value. For, after all, no matter whether we approach the aesthetic value of an object through the subject or through the object itself, it still remains true that it is the object which possesses the aesthetic value. The consensus of experts reveals something but it might reveal the wrong thing; experts frequently have a way of being collectively in error, particularly in such an axiological specialty as the

judgment of a work of art. Thus we are compelled to regard taste in the main not as dictating the value of art but as being dictated to by it. Taste is the recognition of the fact that a considerable amount of beauty has been actualized in a situation; for it is the situation, the actual work of art itself, which remains the center of the artistic value, of which we seek knowledge and acquaintance, and, through knowledge, the enjoyment of works of art.

Chapter VIII

THE PLACE OF ART IN HUMAN CULTURE

IN order to show the relation of art to culture, it will be necessary to separate the analysis into three sections. The first of these will be devoted to the relations between art and cultures as wholes. This will lead to an emphasis on the comparative adventures of art and of cultures in the actual passage of time, and consequently it will lead to a consideration of their coming-to-exist, their duration and their transience or passing away. In the remaining two sections the relation of art to the parts of cultures will be considered, both as actual affairs and as ideal possibilities. That is to say, we shall consider the position of art, which is an institution within cultures but one containing extra-cultural elements, in its relations to the other institutions of cultures, both as the situation exists today and as it ought to exist in the future. The result of these three separate yet developed analyses ought to be a clearer picture of the place of art in human culture, and ought to furnish some indication of the way in which improvements in that relation can be brought about.

I

However else a thing may be explained, it always has its ontological aspect. This aspect is a description of its very being, the essence which renders it a thing, independent of everything else. Art is able to function within cultures in relations to cultures as wholes and in relation to the institutions which form the first elements of analysis of cultures, by virtue of its ontological independence. We shall have to consider it, then, both as an integral part of human culture and as the bearer of extra-cultural values within culture: at once as an institution within culture and as quasi-independent of culture.

As an institution within culture, art has a definite place and a specific function. We shall have to distinguish here between the fine arts, such as painting, the dance, music, and the practical arts, such as cooking, tailoring, basket-making. Art is the qualitative aspect of the perfect relation of parts within an actual whole. Understanding by art only the fine arts, we can see that it is the institution within a culture which furnishes symbols to other institutions, chiefly the higher ones. As an institution, then, it may be expected to share in the life of a culture. Cultures are organizations; as such, they come into existence, grow, flourish, decline and pass away. Studies in the philosophy of culture made by such men as Vico, Spengler and Toynbee have shown that cultures at each of these characteristic stages manifest certain symptoms. They generally arise from contacts between cultures; in their growth stage they are small and creative; but as they develop, the creativeness stops and a conservatism and spreading takes its place, while at the same time the culture tends to enlarge physically in time and

space; as declining civilizations of vast extent, cultures begin to be exacting and to pay more attention to detail, the letter takes the place of the spirit; they perish in a death agony of efforts to hold on and to survive. These are a few of the characteristic symptoms of the life of cultures. The influence which the culture-stage exercises upon the culture is generally felt throughout its parts; that is to say, each of the institutions within a given culture shows the effects of the culture-stage which the culture itself has reached. The institution of politics, for instance, may be expected to be a sketchy affair at first in the career of a culture, to be discursively inventive in its creative period, brilliantly applied in its flourishing, conservative in its decline, and finally coercive and restrictive toward its close.

What is true of politics and of other institutions within a culture must be true of the institution of art as well. We may expect that art must rise, flourish, decline and fall, together with the culture of which it is a part. We have distinguished five stages in the life of cultures: these are (1) coming into existence, (2) growing, (3) flourishing, (4) declining, and (5) passing away. We may now, employing standard terms in art, distinguish the five stages that take place in the institution of art, corresponding to and occasioned by the five stages in the development of cultures. In art these five are: (1) primitive, (2) archaic, (3) classic, (4) academic, and (5) decadent.

(1) When a culture comes into existence, art is in its primitive stage. The culture is struggling to be born and so is the art. It is a period of great strain for both the institution and the culture of which it is a part. The art of the primitive stage of culture is characterized by simplicity, high abstraction, the use of caricature, the absence of detail, and the

property of atemporality. Primitive art is expressive but simple; the factor of caricature, however, reveals that the simplicity is one involving wholes of meaning, for the culture of the primitive is as complex as it is possible to be when so few elements are involved. The simplicity and concentration on wholeness compels it to be highly abstract and atemporal. The primitive has no sense of the elaborate and extended passage of time. He does not take cognizance of change, only of chance. He feels himself to be an integral and necessary part of his culture and his culture to be an integral affair yet one entirely at the mercy of chance, a chance which is usually represented by group relationships with its gods. His art reflects such magnified, maximum simplicity. All art has of course its atemporal aspects, its canonization of the saving values of actuality; but the special atemporal aspect of primitive art is represented by its attempt in each work to depict its culture as a whole through a representation of its chief features and activities. In primitive culture, none of the essential functions are yet separated out; religion is a matter of agriculture, while wars are mixed with cattle raids and hence with hunting. Thus in the representation of persons or of tools and institutions, the same cultural wholeness prevails. The work of art may be a cave drawing of a deer (food), of a steatopygous woman (the primitive quintessence of the perfect childbearer), or it may be a flint knife; no matter: the same essential unity of survival, reproduction, worship and social triumph is employed. Hence it is fair to say that the art of the primitive cultures is a primitive art, a proposition which admits of only one exception which will be noted later. In every sense, then, primitive art is marked by the characteristic feature of the culture of which it is a part, and this characteristic feature

consists in the efforts of the culture to come into existence, an effort which it makes with every part of its organization in a collective and unified fashion.

(2) When a culture is growing, art is in its archaic stage. The culture is crude but it has already begun to separate out and discriminate its various functions. When these functions begin to be regarded by the culture members as not being dependent in any way upon time for their separateness, the conception of static, atemporal elements grows up in the society, and the germ of culture is in this way born. That is the archaic culture stage. As we might have expected, this feature of culture is reflected in its art. Archaic art is satiric, contains little details, and is static, abstract and atemporal. A growing culture and its archaic art both exhibit the effects of growing pains. The strain of coming into existence is for a culture perhaps the greatest shock, but the discovery of equilibrium that comes with the balancing of functions which have been found to be separable is also something of a shock. Hence the static quality in archaic art bears the novelty of having been newly arrived at; it has a certain flatness, but not the flatness of a plain; rather that of a plateau, at the very edge, as though done by an artist who had just arrived breathless from his climb to find that the top was flat and that he would have to climb no more.

We may instance as an example of growing culture Greece in the Age of the Kings (1000–750 *B.C.*); and as an example of art in its archaic stage, the Homeric poems. About both of these there is a kind of early-morning feeling; both have the strength and the awkwardness of youth.

(3) When a culture is flourishing, art is in its classic stage. The culture has here reached the fullness of its powers and development; it has become all that under the circumstances

it could become. The separate functions are now definitely separate and well related to each other, forming an integrated whole which does not in any way affect the working of the parts. Classic art, the art of flourishing culture, employs ideal distortion, sufficient detail properly subordinated, and expresses the future by means of a symbolic, living calm. The ideal distortion involves the conception which the artists of the classic stage hold of what ought-to-exist. The concern is with the future, rather than the past or present; and is not atemporal, since actual perfection or at least progressive improvement is held to be possible. The parts and the whole in works of art have reached here their proper relationship; a paucity of parts is no longer essential to overall meaning which they are now able to convey without usurping the function of the whole. The prevailing characteristic of a flourishing culture and also of its classic art is the living calm that comes with a sense of potential achievement and successfully expended effort. The prospect of the future seems to involve simply an extrapolation of the present advance; all is optimism, hope and the joy of existence.

The classic example of culture in its flourishing period and of art in its classic stage is of course the culture and art of the Greek city-states in the fifth and fourth centuries *B.C.* Despite the wars with the Persians and the internecine strife between Athens and Sparta and their respective allies, the culture had a fullness and a sense of abundance that comes only with the height of power and the perfection of health. The art of Aeschylus and of Phidias, to name but two examples taken at random, will do to illustrate the kind of classic art that accompanies the height of a truly great

culture when in particular it is a culture in which art is assigned its rightful place.

(4) When a culture is declining, art is in its academic stage. The culture has reached and passed the fullness of its powers. It desires now only to hold on, and all its efforts are directed toward that end. It looks to the past for its model and imitates what it has been as part of a plan to remain what it is. The separate functions remain separate but become too much so; they tend to pull apart, and so to lose their vital connections. They are no longer integrated but only aggregated. The academic stage of art, which accompanies declining culture, is emotional, given to exactness of detail, dynamic, realistic and occupied with the present. There is a certain violence to academic art, which is not merely imitative but which reveals a restlessness and uncertainty within the culture. The realistic (in the artistic sense of this term, *i.e.*, naturalistic) attention to profusion of detail, which is in the academic art of a declining culture, held to be 'faithfulness' to nature, works on the assumption that detail is essentially refractory and obdurate. Since wholes are not considered to exist but only to subsist, faithfulness to nature is entirely a matter of attention to reproduction of exact detail. The concern of academic art is wholly with what is acceptable to the present. Hence authority takes the place of inspiration and careworn conformity usurps the function of imagination. Academic art is realistic but lifeless, never daring and utterly conservative. Like the declining culture which it accompanies, it seeks merely to hold on to what it has that is good, an effort that rarely meets with success.

We may choose as an example of declining culture the culture of the Hellenistic Age, the Greece of the Achaean

and the Aetolian Leagues, and the Alexandrian Empire of the Macedonian conquest as split between the central power founded at Alexandria by Ptolemy and at Antioch by Seleucus. As examples of the academic stage of art, some pieces of plastic art produced under this culture will suffice. We may cite the Venus de Milo, the Laocoön and Epigonous of Pergamon's Dying Gaul.

(5) When a culture is passing away, art is in its decadent stage. At this point the culture is in full decline. It no longer hopes to hold on, even though frantic efforts are made in this direction, but only to save something. The separate functions have now almost completely broken away from each other, and there is a unified social group only in virtue of the duress exercised by those in control. New methods of coercion are devised under a dominant minority which seeks to remain in power only from day to day. The saving elements of the culture are, as it were, preserved in a museum run by gangsters. The decadent stage of art which accompanies a culture that is passing away manifests sentimentality that is unbridled, superiority of detail over all other considerations, strain, exaggerated realism and emphasis on the past. Decadent art replaces feeling with sentimentality, which is falsetto feeling; in abject imitation of past attainments, which is not native to the artistic function, great strain is revealed; and in the exaggerated realism of the period the attention to detail obliterates all consideration of the whole which is hardly believed to exist except as a vehicle for such detail. The result is excessive ornateness and elaborate decoration having no recognizable place or function. As the culture loses both its vitality and form and almost ceases to be a culture, art almost ceases to be art. In design alone, through echoes which are reminiscent of the past, art seeks to remain

and to be recognizable, with, however, little success. One variety of the imitation of the past, is the self-conscious effort at simplicity, usually an imitation of the works of the archaic period. This is accompanied by a feverish desire for novelty at any price. But the effect is the same; although the brains are present, and the talent, there is not the same fusion of energy and form, nor the same kind of artistic life, which almost never comes from a slavish imitation of life itself.

The passing away of a culture and the stage of decadent art are, unfortunately, only too characteristic of actual life and all human enterprise. Nothing lasts forever in existence, and no organization constructed in space and time remains the same, whether it be a planet, an organism, a psychological individual or a human culture. Some of the best of the early cave paintings were never finished and some were little more than begun. In our own day many a work of art was left behind in its more formative shape when the artist was drafted and went to war, never to return. Cultures suffer the same fate; and the effort to describe the causes of their ending, whether it be called the "failure of nerve" or traced to some economic occasion, is interesting and necessary but overlooks the fact that cultures have a life-span just as do individuals. Men do not die of old age exactly, but they fall a prey to certain diseases that are peculiar to old age, such as hardening of the arteries, heart failure, etc. Symptoms corresponding to these are observable in decadent art. The Chinese jade carvings of the nineteenth century, as compared with those of the Han Dynasty, the Triumphal Arch in the city of Rome erected under the reign of Constantine, as compared with those in the Forum erected under the Principate, are cases in point. And when a culture falls and its art grows decadent, we can already detect the early signs

of a new culture, which appears primitive and crude in comparison with that which it comes to supplant. The result is a kind of spiritual Pompeii; in the words of E. A. Robinson:

> *"God! what a rain of ashes falls on him*
> *Who sees the new but cannot leave the old."*

Before we can proceed with the general argument, there are a number of observations which must be made concerning the foregoing comparisons between culture stages and art periods.

There is nothing determinative about the parallel which has here been drawn. The philosophers of history, those who have endeavored to read the pattern of culture, usually suppose that the rise and fall cycle imposes a certain determination upon individuals within the culture, so that, for instance, it would be impossible for a great artist to appear in a period of decadent art, or a poor one in a period of art's classic development. But nothing of the sort is required by the present scheme. The pattern here set forth is a general one merely, not a rule or law which is inflexible in its operation. It is more than possible to have an artist who would appear to belong to one period occurring in another. The reason for this exception is that while art tends to follow the life-pattern of culture, all art is art and may have its own value independent of the culture stage which occasioned its production. Art is in part timeless and in part dependent upon time. As art, it is timeless; as dependent upon the culture from which it is a legitimate outgrowth, it is dependent upon time and temporal developments.

In the above sense it is possible to select the art of a highly sterile, artistic culture stage, that of the passing away

of a culture, and to say that nevertheless it is art. The Italian furniture of the *quattrocento*, Dali's paintings at the close of the surrealist movement in art toward the end of the fourth decade of the twentieth century, Hellenistic sculpture—the examples are endless of art marked with all the symptoms of decline which is yet (to use the term in its proper if not encomiastic sense) art. Great art is great despite its underlying philosophy. Consider for example the great art produced under the aegis of studied and civilized 'primitivism,' such as that of Picasso. Each school of art in each culture group, date and place, has its philosophy. This philosophy may make it greater, as in the case of Aeschylus, or may be the death of it, as in the case of Seneca. Elie Faure has put the question well when he asks

> When, for instance, some civilization, reaching the extremity of analysis, breaks and throws into confusion its idols and rather than copy itself indefinitely, attempts, with their debris, to outline some barbaric form that seems the antithesis of the mission it has fulfilled, does it not give the noblest proof of the courage of man, who, even at the cost of disavowing his past, keeps on imagining in order not to die? [23]

What Faure is describing is the effect of decadent art as the creative effort of a culture that is passing away. The cultural need for art rarely engulfs a culture but at no culture stage altogether leaves it. One of the very first efforts of primitive man, when culture is first coming into existence, is in the direction of art. At first indistinguishable from the need for survival and the tools and institutions associated with that need (bone and stone implements, dances and

[23] Elie Faure, *The Spirit of the Forms*, trans. Walter Pach (New York, 1937, Garden City) p. 86. See also *supra*, pp. 84-5.

prayers for rain, fertility ritual, etc.) there is yet a marked difference between the artistic efforts of primitive man and the corresponding articles of utility as contrasted with the fine art and the so-called popular art of an advanced stage of civilization. The drawings etched on the walls of caves in southern France and Spain, the engraved bone carvings, of primitive man, while not great art are none the less art. The cheap gimcrackery of the department-store type of useful article (often elaborately decorated, by the way) and the artistic purity of the primitive's feeble successes at tool-making, furnish an interesting cultural contrast. Art is a function which, like the others, gets separated out in an advanced stage of culture, and enjoys an independent existence which its inherent autonomy so richly deserves.

It would appear, then, that the relation between art and whole cultures can be divided into the effect of culture on art and the effect of art on culture. We have been chiefly examining the effect of culture on art, and we have found that the effect is not a total one; cultures have their effect on the arts, and art periods exhibit a tendency to follow culture stages. But since this correspondence admits of exceptions, the effect is severely limited. Culture does not dictate art; great artists may be found on analogy to biological sports or chronological anomalies in periods of cultural decline, or they may be scarce in periods of cultural flourishing. The effect of culture on art is limited by the ontological independence of art from cultural determination. Culture does not exercise a total effect on art, since art contains extra-cultural elements. But it is still true that culture has an effect on art, and indeed through the various culture stages the influence of culture on art tends to increase. A growing

culture has less effect on archaic art than a declining culture has on academic art.

While culture is limited in its effect on art, the opposite is surprisingly untrue, at least in the sense that there is no culture without art of some sort. At the birth of culture there is art and art is in, too, at the death; the earliest expressions of culture take some kind of artistic form, and, as we have already noted, so do their dying gasps. It would appear that each needs the other; one can hardly imagine art appearing outside a culture except sporadically as a natural phenomenon fortuitously occasioned and, correspondingly, one can not imagine a whole culture with no artistic manifestations whatsoever. Even the war- and trade-minded Assyrians had their sculptors and architects, even though the work of these, particularly in the sculpture of human subjects, left much to be desired. Art is the natural expression of the spirit of man, and this proposition is no less true because man does not himself always or even usually appreciate or understand it. The secularization of art, a logical development of the separation of functions in advanced culture, has led to a somewhat absurd sterility in the encouragement and appreciation of art; art appears to the average robust man of affairs as, from the point of view of the artist, an unnecessary waste of time and as, from his own point of view, a worthy bit of evidence of his success when in his aging years he collects the art objects of the past.

The reason for the cultural independence of art is the fact that *art contains extra-cultural elements consisting in its ontological content.* Works of art are usually produced by human beings living in society, but they do not have to be so produced to be works of art. They could have been

made by accident, an accident in which no human beings participated, such as the action of rivers on driftwood; and they could lack all human appreciation, and still remain works of art. The reason for this is contained in the definition of art in so far as such a definition represents art's true nature. The nature of art as the qualitative aspect of the perfect relation of parts to whole in any organization renders it independent of all external influences, forces, tendencies or attitudes. If it leads a certain kind of life in a culture, yet exists independently of culture, we should expect it to exercise its peculiar function as a cultural part in conjunction with other cultural parts. This it does; and it is time to turn, then, away from the consideration of the relation of art to cultures as wholes, and toward an examination of the relation of art as a peculiar species of cultural part to other cultural parts. This will mean in effect entertaining some conception of art as a cultural institution in its relation to other institutions. We shall, as we saw at the outset, be compelled to consider this relationship both (II) as it exists and has existed in actual cultures and (III) as it ought to exist in the possible cultures of the future.

II

We have noted that art contains extra-cultural elements. It is as the bearer of these elements within culture that art functions as an institution. In this section we shall have to consider the relationships which art considered as an institution bears to other institutions We may look at the matter for a moment in another way, and we may ask, what are the social uses of a work of art? The problem of art as an institution in relation to other institutions is resolvable into the problem of how society produces artists, how it main-

tains and rewards them and how it uses their products. In the following analysis we shall need to keep these problems in mind. We shall need to keep in mind also that while we are discussing the relationships of art in general, different arts vary somewhat in their relationships. For instance, we may note that from a particular point of view, architecture is social in a sense in which sculpture is individual and painting personal. Some arts like the dance require social interpretation in order to make full appreciation an actuality, while others like the novel do not.

First, then, let us proceed to list the social institutions of culture. Reading down, from the most important to the most importunate, these are:

(l) religion
(k) philosophy
(j) fine art
(i) pure science
(h) decorative art
(g) practical technology
(f) politics
(e) education
(d) economics
(c) communication
(b) transportation
(a) family

Fine art itself has been labeled (j) in this list, and occurs as the third from the top of the most important institutions. This is not the proper place to discuss the organization of culture in any great detail[24], yet we must pause long enough

[24] But see *The Theory of Human Culture*, chapter V.

to note at least that the more important institutions are dependent mechanically upon the more importunate, and the lack of such support can occasion their immediate destruction. It is the case also that the more importunate institutions are given their purpose or meaning by the more important. We could not have pure science without a functioning economy in a society, for instance, yet there would be no reason to have a functioning economy except to support such institutions as that of pure science. The higher is helplessly dependent upon the lower for its very existence yet the lower is dependent upon the higher for its *raison d'être*. The institutions we have listed above are not intended to be exhaustive, only indicative; yet they should be sufficient to indicate the hierarchy which exists among cultures. The family is more basic than transportation and transportation more basic than communication, etc. Similarly, pure science is more general than practical technology, and philosophy more general than pure science.

We are now in a position to compare the relations of fine art with each institution in the list. We shall do this in order, starting from the most basic and ending with the most general.

(a) *The family*. The institution of the family represents the effort of survival at its most basic level. The family, whatever its organization—and this tends to vary widely among different cultures—centers about the problem of breeding and raising children. What part does art play in this development? There have been cultures in which an effort was made to surround the prospective mother with objects of art in order to insure that the children would be beautiful. The ability to own art objects and to have them in the home is an economic question. The relation of the

artist to his own family, where sufficient public reward for his work is not forthcoming, as is so frequently the case, presents a difficult problem. Suffice to say that the family is basic in a sense in which art is not. The relevancy of art to social institutions is in direct proportion to the height of the institution in the hierarchy of institutions; the higher, the more necessary its relation to art.

The family is a matter of life itself, its maintenance and continuation. Where does art fit into life? According to the play theory, art is a sort of superfluous affair, a beautiful excrescence on the business of getting a living and perpetuating the species. Santayana, for example, would have us believe that art belongs to what he calls our "holiday life" [25] during the marginal interval when we are free from following the rules laid down for us by necessity and can follow our own capriciousness. This play theory undoubtedly has some validity, but it would offer no grounds for distinguishing between games and art. There is, after all, a difference between the appreciation of a play or a poem and a game of volleyball or chess. Both may offer the relief of relaxation from the round of our daily grind, whatever that may consist of, but while such relief, relaxation and change may exhaust the meaning of the exercise or game, it can hardly do so for the work of art or its appreciation. There is more to art than mere enjoyment of it, and more to the enjoyment of it than the mere relaxation or entertainment which it may for the moment afford.

It would seem, to the contrary, that the time left over from the necessary business of living and the effort at survival is used not as a diversion from life but rather as a means by which to intensify the experience of living. And the employ-

[25] *The Sense of Beauty*, Part I.

ment of this means, raised so to speak to the highest power, consists in the objective love of beauty for its own sake. There is no sharp divorce between art and life, such that we entertain ourselves with art when we have time which we do not have to devote to earning a living. This is vicious denial of the usefulness of art and the purpose of life. No; such a devitalizing dichotomy applies only to the popular (as opposed to the fine and applied) arts. The usual run of novels and of motion pictures have no artistic ambitions and are intended merely to entertain in a desultory sort of way, which is in fact precisely what they do. The fine arts are something else again. The true appreciation of the objects of fine art leads to more meaning in the ordinary conduct of affairs. The arts lend both meaning and significance to life. He who is at home in all the arts is capable of having a deeper existence, a fuller life, of reacting with a more concentrated actuality. Whether he does so or not is another question. It is always possible for the exceedingly weak who yet have sensitive perceptions to appreciate art without remainder, to be used up by it and to be left by their experience empty and washed out, capable of nothing that requires an expenditure of energy, hardly capable even of living. But the strong individual returns from the arts with more strength for living, with more understanding and with a greater potential apprehension. The physical exercise which the sick man takes may do him harm, but the strong are made stronger.

Family relationships have long been a familiar theme of art. The chief of these, perhaps, has been romantic love. The art ends when the family relationship begins: 'and they were married and lived happily ever after.' But then again, the sex relationship, the beauty of the female or of the male body, as well the the joyousness of children, is the familiar and

recurrent theme in art. The basic mother-child relationship, transmuted under Christian auspices to madonna-and-child, is the most familiar theme in all art, Western art, at least, to this day. Dramatic tragedies, ballets, novels and many other forms have been long devoted to the theme of jealousy. In art, family relationships begin where art leaves off; but in social life, as a matter of mere importunity, there can be little doubt that the family comes first in the life of the members of every class except the artists themselves.

(b) *Transportation.* The influence of art on transportation considered as a pair of institutions is not a serious affair. In the construction of the means of transportation, form tends to follow function; the result may be beautiful or ugly. The wires and poles of the telephone system have been seen as beautiful in certain perspectives by certain painters but tend on the whole to mar the landscape. On the other hand, certain windstreamed automobiles and trains are held to be beautiful things. Art as such has little effect upon transportation.

Transportation, however, does have its effect upon art. The interfertilization of art movements is made possible by swift travel and the conveyance of both artists and works of art from one place to another. The art of western Europe has influenced the Chinese landscape and figure painters; similarly, oriental art has had effect upon European artists. The introduction of primitive African Negro carvings into the Paris shops had a tremendous effect upon modern painting and sculpture. Probably transportation in the wholesale, institutional sense does not depend upon art and art does not depend upon transportation; but the usefulness of transportation to art can hardly be called into question. Transportation is the crude, physical and obvious form of communication;

and in the question of art, it is communication in its more subtle forms that is intimately involved.

(c) *Communication.* The relationships of art and communication must be given separate consideration. The effect of art on communication is an important one. There is a sense in which art is a language, for it conveys values—feelings—which are conveyed in no other way. The efforts of the art critic to convey in analytic language the meaning of a painting, a quartet, or a dance, are indeed futile. The language of art is not analytic but ampliative. That is what we mean when we say that we understand some particular work of art but cannot express it ourselves; if we could we would be artists. All languages are sets of symbols, and these symbols, however interpreted, always carry some weight of qualitative meaning, some force or axiologic content, despite the fact that they are intended primarily to convey some logical or analytical message. The peculiarity of art as a language is that its connotative aspect is not incidental but central, and its denotative aspect is relegated to an inferior position. The weight of qualitative meaning of the artistic language is its chief purpose. For art is a myth-carrying language. The language that art speaks is primarily the language of value, expressed in symbolic form.

In the past, we have tended to consider the language of science as a general one and the language of art as particular. This error arose from the mistaken conception of values as particulars. Universals are general but so are values. The wave-length of green is a universal, but the quality which we describe as the color, green, is also general, as general as the universal. All greens of a certain shade are equally green—examples of the universal quality or value, green. Thus art, which speaks the quality, or value, language, is also universal,

as universal as science, even though not as analytical. Languages are the tools of communication. Art, it can be asserted, is a specific form of communication, that form by which certain of the higher values are conveyed.

In addition to the effect of art on communication, which is what we have been discussing, there is also the effect of communication (or the lack of communication) on art. By communication in this sense we shall mean the dependence of art on other forms of communication, upon languages other than its own. If by art we mean the fine arts, then the range of communication of art is strictly limited. Literary works of art, especially poetry, are limited by the languages in which they are written; everything suffers by translation somewhat, or is changed even where improved, and poetry is nearly impossible to translate at all. But what is true of poetry is true to a certain extent of all the arts. How many persons in the United States today are capable of reading and of appreciating Walt Whitman? How many persons anywhere enjoy Aeschylus' *Oresteia* triology? Compare these classics for their contemporary reception with Gary Cooper or Abbot and Costello. The technique of printing in its perfect inpartiality is capable of reproducing both comic books and Chekhov indefinitely. Yet the public demand, which governs such questions, is not impartial.

It is not impartial with respect to immediate demand nor with respect to long-range demand; and the two are distinctly different. Immediate demand decides in favor of the popular idol of the moment: Amos and Andy, Greta Garbo, or what you will. But long-range demand is more discriminating. There is a cultural lag operative here. The actualities of artistic communication correspond to the potentialities of artistic appreciation, but not to the actualities of artistic

appreciation. We have increased immensely the number of those who are able to read, and we have cheapened the price of books; mass-production printing and free libraries have put the access to books within the reach of all. And to what end? To enable everyone to read Western stories, detective stories, and sentimental romances. Of course the wrong use of an instrument is no indictment of the instrument but only of its use. The printing press, like the airplane, was misused at the very start; but that does not mean that printing presses will always be devoted chiefly to printing books that succeed in debasing the public taste and sensibilities any more than it means that the airplane will always be devoted chiefly to war. Perhaps immediate misuse is an evil that must be gone through before the facilitated function finds its proper level.

In the civilization stage, that is, when cultures are declining or passing away, we learn to distinguish between popular arts and the fine arts. In the culture stage, that is, when cultures are coming into existence, growing or flourishing, there is no such distinction. The distinction when it exists is nevertheless an invidious one, and depends upon a dislocation, a false disjunction, in the institution of art. Some arts, of course, penetrate further into popularity than others; music for instance. That has little to do with their real worth and may come about for purely extraneous reasons. How many of those who sit in the same seats every other week-end to hear a symphony orchestra play Bach, Mozart or Beethoven have the remotest conception of the complexities which are involved in such music? The question arises whether it is good to do the right things for the wrong reasons. Perhaps; perhaps not; we do not yet know. It would appear that composers worked harder and with more genius in the days when musicians came after valets in importance at the nobleman's

table and hornblowers were not allowed in the drawing room. Certainly there is faulty communication when art fails to be appreciated by those who theoretically have access to it yet reject it in favor of more palatable though harmful stuff. The problem then becomes one of education rather than communication.

(d) *Economics.* The effect of art on economics is a minimal affair indeed. A social group, such as a nation or state, which rested on the love of art would orient its economic system around that love. This kind of society, however, is unknown and exists only as a possibility, the spectacle of classic Greece notwithstanding. Our remarks in this section, then, will have to be confined to the effect of economics on art. The effect of economics on art is divided between the economic fate of the work of art and the economic fate of the artist.

The funds available for works of art are practically unlimited in a society such as ours. But they are seldom used for this purpose. This defection does not alter the fact that one purpose of business is to be able to afford art. The business men, or some of them, have the funds. But the art must be guaranteed worthy in order to earn any of it, and this requires centuries of endorsement. Hence the only art which can command sizable sums is classic art, *i.e.*, art either of the classic period or rendered such artificially by official endorsement. The only exception to this is the academic contemporary artist, the artist of the academic type (who, it will be recalled, does not have to occur only in the declining stage of culture but may occur at any time). Under the 'star' system of today, whereby one artist or intrepeter is singled out above others (who may be his equals or only slightly less good, or, sometimes even better but less obvious)

for excessive reward. Surrealism was dead as an art movement in the nineteen twenties, but Dali has been publicized and rewarded above all other surrealists only in the nineteen forties. There are other abstractionists besides Picasso, but Picasso is almost the only one who is so well known and whose pictures are so highly prized.

Artists are notoriously bad business men; they are indeed such by definition, just as we might describe a business man as a notoriously bad artist. The only difference is that the business man does not have to be an artist in the course of his business, whereas the artist does have to be a business man to some extent in the conduct of his career as an artist. Various culture stages have tried to solve the problem of the living of the artist in various ways, all, one might say, equally unsatisfactory. The artist lives under a system of subsidy or one of patronage, or he endeavors to get along on his own in a capitalist society, through the public sale of his work. The latter method involves middlemen or dealers, who cannot fail to take advantage of the ignorance of the artist in business matters and to grab for themselves the bulk of the profits or at least an unduly large share. Art treasures, as we have now learned to call them, bring enormous sums from private and public collectors; but such sums do not know how to find their way into the pockets of dead artists.

The system of private patronage or of public subsidy is no better. Private patronage is with notable exceptions apt to be misguided, demanding, or humiliating. Public subsidy usually is given to the wrong people. There is more often than not nothing worse than an 'official' artist; his work must have all of the hallmarks of the past except the genius which first inspired it. There is for some as yet unaccountable reason something essentially inimical to institutionalizing about

the nature of art. It has to work in complete freedom, as we shall note in a later section. Part of this freedom must be furnished by the economic level of institution. The economic level provides for the exchange of goods in a culture. It is basic and permissive; for every institution within a culture touches upon the economic which furnishes it with its means, regardless of its end. This insures that the institution of art, like that of any other cultural enterprise, has its economic aspect. Yet it is never an aspect with which art is completely at home. There is something essentially wrong with the pecuniary evaluation of a work of art and the pecuniary return to the artist; the yardstick does not seem to be the appropriate one for such values. Yet the fact remains that the work of art is a cultural object and the artist a person living in and supported by a culture; which is only another way of saying that the importunateness of the economic institution cannot be escaped by any other which is higher in the scale of values and perchance deals with more important things.

(e) *Education.* The effect of education on art is nothing to get very excited about. Until we learn how to abstract and teach the method of art, the education of the artist must remain an undisciplined affair. The attempt of the conventional and traditional schools to aid the function of art has always been a pitiful undertaking, doomed from the start to failure. The art schools which have been the most successful are those which have started as independent ventures and do not give degrees, yet succeed to some extent in teaching art. The reason for their success is that in a loose sort of way they operate by the atelier method. In primitive cultures, everything is taught in this way; we are still able to see the young children of the American Indians being taken

into the hogans to learn the ceremonial dances. We have learned to supplant this rather crude method of teaching by imitation in other fields, but not yet in art. The best art school is still the atelier of the artist, and the best system the apprentice system. As yet there is no good way to study art except to watch a great artist at work, and to receive his suggestions, advice and encouragement. This method admittedly points to a deficiency in our knowledge of the principles and logical methods of art. What can be abstracted can certainly be taught.

The effect of art on education is another question. It is doubtful whether a man who had no experience with any of the arts and knew nothing about them could be said to be educated. In an age of accent on physical technologies in education, the tendency has been to neglect the arts. Now, there is no way to teach art as such; but it is not too difficult a task to familiarize the student with the best that has been done in some of the arts and with the pioneering work of his artistic contemporaries. Education in art may not be of any very great service to the artist, but it is definitely essential for everyone else. No man with a thoroughgoing knowledge of his culture can afford to be without some acquaintance with the arts. The 'liberal arts colleges' confine their artistic endeavors for the most part to the literary arts, but in some cases—particularly in the women's colleges—extend their interests to the plastic arts, music and the dance. Thus art must exercise an important function in education even though thus far the reverse is not true.

(f) *Politics.* The institution of art has little effect on the conduct of politics. In general the ability of a politician to appreciate art or to take institutions of art into account in the business of politics is apt to be a handicap rather than

an advantage, however much it may be worth to the politician personally. Art, except in unusual instances, is not a political pawn having any value. Kingdoms may have been offered for a horse, but it is not on record that they have ever been exchanged for a painting or a piece of sculpture. Art is not a means to politics.

But the reverse is untrue, for politics is definitely a means to art. One of the purposes of politics is to furnish a system of freedom, and art flourishes better under a system of freedom than it does under any other. Art and political freedom go together, for the artist can do his best work when he is free to do whatever he likes. But those who say that without freedom there can be no art are flying in the face of historical facts. Art has flourished under systems other than those aimed at freedom. Were this not so, there would have been little art, there having been so little freedom in social history. Art has been able to survive, and for a while even to thrive, in the adverse atmosphere of absolutisms. Artists have been able to dwell—and to work—in the interstices between freedoms. Art survives better than do other high, cultural enterprises, as for instance painting did under the church despots of the Middle Ages, chiefly because art has a certain autonomy which renders it immune to the effects of the institution which may at the moment be uppermost and have control of political power. Then again, the artist who believes in the prevailing absolutist dogma emanating from whatever institution is free to serve it and to make symbols of its myths without compromise and, so far as he is concerned, with perfect liberty. The medieval Christian artist who really believed in Christianity did not feel himself confined any more than does the modern artist in Soviet Russia who really believes in Marxism. It is only

when some absolutism in control of a culture feels itself losing out and strives to hold on anyhow that the artist feels trammeled by it. If democracy be understood as that form of government which deliberately aims at a system of human freedom, then it can be recorded that Greek democracy produced much great art, American democracy thus far very little. But the fact remains that freedom is the best condition for art, just as it is for the development of pure science or of any other manifestation of high culture. Thus art gives politics one of its purposes, while politics furnishes art with a means or mechanism.

(g) *Practical Technology.* The effect of art on technology is purposive, that of technology on art mechanical, just as we would expect that it would be. Technology is responsible for furnishing the means to many of the arts. In the case of sculpture, for instance, many new plastic materials have recently been made available. In painting, there are new oil colors compounded from chemicals. The art of the motion picture is, mechanically speaking, almost altogether made possible by technology, physical and biological. The film itself and its methods of recording and reproducing are physical. Color film, the latest development, is biochemical. Here, then, is an entirely new art, having certain limitations which the older art of the theatre does not feel, but having also boundless new possibilities in other directions which the theatre does not have, all made possible, brought to the borderline of art, so to speak, by the practical technologies, themselves by-products of the sciences.

The effect of art on practical technology is to give it an aim. What are the practical technologies *for*, if not to serve enterprises, such as the arts (as well as the pure sciences, philosophy and perhaps even theology), themselves in search

of something still higher. The business of living is made easier by the practical technologies; but we do not live merely in order to live. Our lives, supposedly, are directed toward some higher goal, even if that goal be conceived merely as one of ethical and aesthetic enjoyment.

(h) *Decorative Art.* The decorative arts do not have any noticeable effect on fine art. Most of the effect is the other way round. For the decorative arts stand in the same relation to the fine arts as the practical technologies do to the pure sciences. The decorative arts are practical affairs; they receive and apply to the best of their ability and on a large scale the findings of the fine arts. The fine arts represent detached inquiry into the nature of certain higher values. The decorative arts are not so detached; they aim at profits, applications and accomplishments, rather than beauty or truth. They are slavishly attached to the fine arts, but usually fail to keep up with them. The lag is both temporal and cultural. It required a quarter of a century for the surrealist movement in painting to have its first decisive effect upon the decoration of the show windows in the department store of Saks-Fifth Avenue in New York. The fine arts do the pioneering in the matter of decoration, whereas the decorative arts are given to compromise, cheapness, and even to bad taste, in applying what the pure arts have discovered in good taste. Thus the relation between the fine arts and the decorative arts is almost altogether a one-way affair of the effect of the fine arts on the decorative.

There is, of course, no absolute break between the fine arts and the decorative arts; one shades off into the other. But there is nevertheless a qualitative difference, fine art carrying an intensity of meaning and a concentration of value which is foreign to decorative art. The fine arts may grow out

of the decorative, as no doubt painting has done, or out of the practical technologies, as in the case of architecture; but the historical derivation does not determine the logic and value. Art is art and not mere decoration. In the case of some minor arts it is difficult to distinguish between their status as decorative arts and as practical technologies. Cooking and clothing are pertinent instances. Both decorative arts and practical technologies may apply yet remain inferior to the findings of the fine arts which historically they occasioned.

(i) *Pure Science.* When we discuss the interrelations of science and art, we are nearing the top of the hierarchy of social institutions within culture. The interrelations are no less marked for being tenuous and no less real for being abstract and general in their nature.

Art furnishes science a new and entirely distinct field of inquiry. The endeavor to measure aesthetic value is a step toward the discovery of principles, rules and equations in the science of art. The work of Helmholtz, Hay, Hambidge and others who have sought to discover the law and dimensions in works of art and in their appreciation is evidence that some think a scientific approach to art possible. The field of the fine arts is from the viewpoint of pure science a separate empirical field of inquiry.

Science furnishes art with a model of high abstraction, a model which art has used in the treatment of values as science has used it in the treatment of relations. In the seventeenth century science took an enormous step forward in the matter of abstractions, a step larger than any which art has taken since. Among the names in science may be mentioned those of Harvey, Kepler, Galileo, Huyghens, Boyle and Newton. In the following century, music (the most

abstract of the fine arts) launched upon its greatest period of abstraction with the music of Vivaldi, Bach, Scarlatti, Handel and Mozart. There was of course no direct imitation, and not all of the composers knew of the work of all the scientists. But science had set the pace for a drift toward abstraction which no doubt was somewhere in the implicit postulates of the day.

Music is not the only art in which we can trace the influence of science. Such influence is more direct and almost self-conscious even in some of the modern plastic arts. The similarity between the primitive art of the cave men and the more sophisticated naivete of a contemporary Picasso has been pointed out very often but may prove to be more fortuitous than has been supposed. The cave artist may only have been trying to represent a three-dimensional object on a flat surface when he carved the bas relief of the two bulls' heads heraldically opposed.[26] Picasso in his combination of full face with profile is trying to follow consciously, if symbolically, a method used for the best possible faithful reproduction of motion represented statically.[27] In sculpture, the same forces which we have observed in painting are at work. Look at the progressive trend toward high-order abstraction in the development of the art of the English sculptor, Henry Moore.[28] Most of Moore's work has been devoted to the study of two figures, mother and child, and a reclining female figure; of these, let us consider the development of the last. Moore went from a fairly representational study of the reclining female figure propped on elbows, legs outstretched,

[26] H. G. Spearing, *The Childhood of Art* (London, 1930, Benn) i, p. 51-2.
[27] Horace M. Kallen, *Art and Freedom* (New York, 1942, Duell, Sloan and Pearce), vol. ii, p. 681. Picasso, *Seize Peintures* (Paris, 1943, Les Editions du Chêne).
[28] Henry Moore, *Sculpture and Drawings* (New York, 1944, Valentin).

to the same figure with the hollow of the pelvic bone and the head only suggested by a round form, to the 'stringed figures' of a cord stretched between the two extremities of an arc, suggesting intestinal lines drawn across the pelvic bone but more abstract than anything so representational.

Of course when the method of abstraction is applied to art, the result is no mere imitation or following of the abstractive method of science. The necessary and appropriate changes have been made, *mutatis mutandis*, suitable not for science but for art. Yet there can be little doubt that the same forces compelling the search for the highest abstractions are at work in both fields of endeavor.

(j) *Fine Art.* There is not much to say concerning the relations between art and art except for the fact that this might be the place to discuss briefly the relations between the 'ivory tower' method in the institution of art and the other institutions in a culture. The problem of 'art for art's sake' has been debated for a long while. It has been defended on the ground that art is an institution having no necessary relations with any other. It has been condemned on the ground that since such an isolation does not represent the true situation, its results are deadly for art which cannot fail to stagnate and die in such a vacuous security.

Both defenders and attackers are using false arguments, since both accept the proposition that art pursued for art's sake can have no social effect. This proposition is false. There is in every high and abstractive endeavor a certain methodological isolation of procedure, which is necessary temporarily for the purposes of operation if anything socially or culturally useful is to result. The mathematicians at their best and most fruitful are sure that the uses to which mathematics may be put, whether the use is a pure one, as in mathematical

physics, or a more utilitarian one, as in bridge building, can produce nothing but a sordid perversion so far as pure mathematics itself is concerned. The fact is the mathematics *is* independent of the uses to which it may or may not be put, and to produce anything eventually useful this high attitude must be faithfully maintained. The paradox is a psychological one merely. For we cannot apply abstractions unless they *are* abstractions, and it is tautological to add that they must be pursued in abstraction. Much the same situation prevails in art. Methodologically, that art will have little effect socially and culturally as art which is produced with an eye to its social and cultural effect. Whether the artist does or does not scorn such matters as social usefulness, applications or relevancy, it does not matter so long as his whole attention and interest is centered in his art and not in its external relations. When the artist is practicing as an artist, his whole concern must be with the internal relations of art.

(k) *Philosophy*. The higher we go in the hierarchy of institutions the more intimate become the interrelationships between the various institutions. There is no difficulty in distinguishing between art and philosophy, but this fact does not make the delimning of their various and subtle interrelationships any easier to set forth.

The effect of art on philosophy in general consists in the peculiar character of philosophy itself. Philosophy is neither well-defined art nor a well-defined science, but something apart which partakes of the nature of both. Philosophy strives to become a science; in the meantime it is an art. The suggestions toward making a science of philosophy are contained in one of the greatest of all literary works of art, the *Dialogues* of Plato. There, as in all works of art, the truth that beauty holds is qualitatively displayed with an effulgence

or radiance that we have come to expect only from the very greatest works of art. When philosophy succeeds as it does in this instance in being a work of art, some persons are actually misled into supposing that there is nothing to philosophy that cannot be included in the term, art. They were never further from the truth. For the artistic elements in philosophy are often very strong but they are never the chief elements. The task of philosophy is to discover and to set forth the widest truths; and if some of these truths are truths concerning values, then they may touch upon aesthetic values and the subject matter of art; and if they are very beautifully and even dramatically expressed, then they may adopt the method of literary art for their purposes of exposition. But the method of philosophy is a method and not itself the philosophy; hence the adoption by philosophy of the method of art does not make of philosophy an art even though the artistic element may be in it.

The effect of philosophy on art is felt most distinctly in the branch of philosophy which is devoted chiefly to the problems and theories of art, namely, aesthetics. Aesthetics is at the present time that branch of philosophy which treats of the theory of art. It is not itself an art but in the name of philosophy concerns itself with the theory of the fine arts, their assumptions, method and conclusions. It is doubtful whether aesthetics in the hands of the professional philosophers has exerted any very considerable influence over the arts. But aesthetic questions (in which, after all, artists, acting as amateur philosophers do indulge) are philosophical questions having to do with the arts. And every artist maintains some sort of aesthetic theory, amateur or professional, implicitly or explicitly, valid or invalid.

We have now reached the point at which art is an institu-

tion lower in the hierarchy than the other institutions we are discussing. Philosophy is the first of these, and the relationship to art is now reversed: art is the means and philosophy the end.

The institutions of philosophy and art have subtle interrelations which are not officially recognized and institutionalized as such, and this quite irrespective of what is officially maintained to be true in this regard.

(i) *Religion.* The last institution we shall have to consider in its relations with the institution of art is that of religion. Religion has for many millennia given art a content to express. It would be easy to assert that the content of art always has its religious aspect even where the particular art in question is not serving any institutionalized religion. Institutionalized religion, however, almost always has been a patron of the arts. The reason for this is not far to seek. Art for religion is a necessary means. Religion lives by symbolism and mythology, and art is a symbolic expression of myth. From the earliest known examples of Egyptian sculpture to the madonnna and child of Henry Moore, carved for the Church of St. Matthew in Northampton, religion has always required art as a means of symbolically expressing its myths. Even where the danger of idol-worship has occasioned church fathers to rule the plastic arts out of the religious province, as with the Jews and Arabs, other arts have replaced those which have been banished. The literature of the Jews, as contained in the Old Testament, and the literature and decoration of the Arabs has been required to carry the symbolic expression of the myth. Of course there undoubtedly have been cases of artists who served a religion in which they did not have too strong a personal interest. Were all the great artists of the Italian renaissance good and

pious Christians? Are the Jewish sculptors of today, Jacob Epstein, Ahron Ben-Shmuel, and Joe Davidson, as impious as their making of graven images would lead us logically to suppose? These comparisons strengthen the suggestion, put forth earlier, that art is able to retain a certain amount of autonomy even when it is compelled to serve another institution. Art can get along without religion but religion needs art. This two-way relationship would suggest that art is the means and religion the end, which is in fact the case, for the same kind of relationship holds here as held between philosophy and art.

We have reached the end of our brief discussion of the interrelations of the institution of art with other institutions. A few general observations remain to be made.

We have carried art up the scale of institutions, and we have seen that the relationships of art illustrate as well as could those of any other that an institution serves as the purpose of those below it in the series and a mechanism for those above. An institution cannot do without its mechanisms, but a mechanism cut off from its purpose may still be a mechanism albeit a meaningless one. The dependency of art on other institutions below it in the series is clear. It depends, being an institution of high order, upon all other institutions with the exception of religion and philosophy. These it serves as a mechanism, being lower than they in the series.

Cultures, as we have seen, are not loose agglomerations of parts but integrated wholes. They are wholes which are somewhat like organisms; they can hardly do with the loss of any of their parts. Art is a part of the cultural whole, and art can almost do without culture more easily than culture can do without art. There are times when the fine arts become divorced and estranged from the members of the cul-

ture-group in which they have flourished. Painters, composers, sculptors, choreographers, poets, all existed in the United States in the second quarter of the twentieth century. But almost the only arts known to the vast majority of the hundred and forty million persons of that date and place were the popular arts of the motion picture and the radio, popular arts which rarely rose to the level of the fine arts. But this distressing fact did not lessen the importance of the fine arts to the American culture. The dependence of culture upon art does not hinge upon psychological considerations of recognition but upon cultural facts of organization.

III

The knowledge which we cannot escape of the deficiencies in the cultures we know, with respect to the interrelationships between art and whole cultures and art and parts of cultures (institutions), leads us to the necessity for making hypothetically a picture of the kind of culture art ought to have as its environment.

From the viewpoint of cultures as wholes, the fine arts and the pure sciences enjoy a certain autonomy. They are essential parts of cultures and could not occur without cultures; but they carry a subject-matter which is, so to speak, in the last analysis culture-free. The values of art and the laws which the empirical sciences seek are *there*, ontologically, whether we chance to discover them or not; they are in no wise dependent for their being upon our discovery of them.

Cultures live upon the credit extended to them by the pure sciences and fine arts of the past. The pure sciences and fine arts of their present represent their investment in their own future. A culture which desires to prosper must amortize

its investment in its scientists and artists without expecting anything from them in the way of immediate benefits. The relation of a culture to the art of its present ought to be one of tolerance and hope and perhaps faith and pride.

The particular institutions to which art is related have something to contribute to art more than they are doing at the present time. The family can raise its availability and receptivity to the artist. Transportation, communication and economics can set aside a larger portion of their services and resources toward the furtherance of art. Education can devote as much energy to it as is devoted now to the pure sciences without the sacrifice of anything important. Politics can furnish it with the freedom in which its imaginative efforts are at liberty to work without constraint. Practical technology can furnish it with the means, the new materials and techniques which can be turned to artistic purposes from merely mechanical ones. The decorative arts can follow more closely than they have been in the habit of doing. Pure science can add to the general evaluation by holding such non-scientific endeavors in higher esteem. The implicit dominant ontology of cultural philosophical belief can through the efforts of philosophy provide a greater place for art. And religion can return to its symbolic and myth-making faculties and learn through art to revive its old general credence upon which its power so completely has depended.

So far as particular institutions are concerned, art is capable of a great deal. It is capable of making life more enjoyable and increasing awareness for the family. It can do little practically for transportation, communication and economics except direct their practical activities to some more valuable purpose. In education, which requires purposes almost as much as it does practices, we must learn how to abstract the

axiological principles of art even though this task may be more difficult than the abstraction of the logical principles of science has proved. If we can abstract them, we can teach them, and thus put forward the aims of education a great way. Art can teach politics to be not an end in the culture but a means. Art can enliven practical technology just as it can the decorative arts. It can furnish a complementary activity to pure science, and a means or mechanism to philosophy and religion. The future of art in culture depends eventually upon the basic evaluations or beliefs of the culture. The hierarchy of institutions as set forth here consists of an hypothesis of the way institutions ought to be arranged, their natural order. But that is not the way in which they are ordinarily arranged. Economics and politics often tend to usurp first and last place, as does religion. But to consider religion basic when it stands at the top is a weakness and an error. And to consider art to belong way down in the list when in fact it should stand third from the top is also an error. Any of these errors may prove fatal ones in a culture. In any consideration of what a culture ought to be, we must take into account the place of art, both as it is and as it ought to become. For it is only by assigning art its proper place that the best can be expected from art and the most contributed by it to the greatness of culture, of which it is and yet is not quite ever a part.

Chapter IX

THE HYPOTHESIS OF AESTHETIC MEASURE

THE prospect of devising a method which would make it possible to measure the aesthetic content or value of works of art is one which has intrigued speculative men from very early times. But it has also aroused the most intense antagonism on the part of those who are jealous of the freedom and creative spontaneity of that most specifically individual of enterprises. In order to engage further in such speculation, therefore, our task must be threefold. (I) We shall be obliged to examine the claims of those who would urge us to desist; (II) we must glance at the work of those who have pioneered, with or without success, in order to determine what if anything has already been accomplished; we shall then feel more in a position (III) to pursue our own researches and to attempt to add something, however little it may be, to the common effort.

I

The opposition to the measurement of aesthetic value usually takes the form of one of the six following arguments, or a corollary of some one of these.

(1) Aesthetic value is subjective. It inheres in the human individual. Hence it cannot be measured in actual works of art.

(2) Aesthetic value is relative. It is a product of the relation between the appreciator and the work of art. Hence it is incommensurable.

(3) Aesthetic value is mystical and ineffable and so cannot be measured.

(4) Aesthetic value is in its very essence opposed to science and the mechanization which science entails, and hence cannot be measured.

(5) Aesthetic value is spiritual; mathematics is physical. Hence aesthetic value cannot be measured.

(6) Aesthetic value is what we enjoy in art. To measure would be to analyze and to deprive us of that very enjoyment for which we go to art. Hence aesthetic value should not be measured even if it could be.

Let us examine these arguments one at a time in an effort to discover whether there is any truth in them.

(1) It is asserted that aesthetic value is subjective, that it inheres in the human individual, and hence that it cannot be measured.

Aesthetic value is either subjective, relative or objective; either it inheres in the subject, is a product of the relation between subject and object or is a property of the object, for there appears to be no fourth choice. These, of course, are epistemological considerations. The *being* of aesthetic value is an ontological question, and to answer an ontological question epistemologically is to assume a certain philosophy to begin with, and moreover one which may be valid or invalid. This situation itself makes for particular difficulties. It may be that we should not accept our ontological bent

from epistemology but on the contrary should insist upon deriving our epistemological considerations from a prior examination of ontology, on the grounds that the implicit acceptance of fundamental propositions may lead us to error more surely than the examination of such propositions. The fashionable method is the former. We shall follow it, with the reminder, however, that we do not escape a difficulty by avoiding it.

Now, to consider the position of those who hold aesthetic value to be subjective, there appear to be two difficulties in the way of such a view. The extreme subjectivist position, in aesthetic value theory as in all other theory, is both irrefutable and untenable. It is irrefutable because it is a variety of the solipsist philosophy. If aesthetic value is subjective, then it is a property of the knowing person and is contributed to the act of appreciating a work of art by the person appreciating. This makes it peculiar to each person and puts it beyond the pale of proof or disproof, since it may differ (and on this theory probably does differ) from person to person. If aesthetic value is subjective, then, there can be no grounds for the comparison of it from instance to instance, no way indeed to discuss it. The value of a given work of art would have to be locked up in the mind or soul of each individual apprehending it, and there would be nothing in common for evaluation. But if the subjective or solipsist position cannot be refuted, neither can it be accepted. The individual's own sanity is set against his denial of all except his own existence: it is simply not feasible to doubt everything. Subjectivism is a false position, then, because such a radical aporia is not legitimate in philosophy.

Those who hold the subjectivist position in aesthetic theory do not deny that there are such things as works of

art, they merely insist that the aesthetic value of works of art is contributed by the subject. Those who contend that *everything* is subjective are solipsists, and they are the only ones who hold a position which is unassailable. When aesthetic value becomes one with everything else, in any form of absolute monism which admits of no distinction, or if it admits of distinction makes such distinction an absolutely individual affair, there is nothing more that can profitably be said about it. To those who admit the objective existence of works of art but insist merely that their value is subjective, the question may be addressed, how can the surprising extent of the agreement which exists among human beings concerning those particular works of art which have been before the public for a long time be disposed of? The number of persons now of any school or shade of belief who would deny the aesthetic value of the Parthenon, the *Iliad*, or Plato's *Dialogues* is extremely small, if indeed any such persons can be found. Perhaps the breadth of agreement can be explained on the basis of the similarity of persons: people are not too unlike in most other respects. But the similarity of persons does not seem sufficient to bring about agreement on most fundamental problems and questions. Why, then, does it occur in the case of aesthetic value? This difficulty is surmounted, in the opinion of some, by the contention that aesthetic value is not individual but social.

One variation of the subjectivist position, then, attempts to get round the obvious difficulties by asserting that aesthetic value is not subjective but intersubjective; that is, it does not inhere in the individual person but rather in the relation between persons, and so obtains a somewhat precarious hold on existence in the relation between minds. This allows for comparison and evaluation, of course, but

it, too, presents difficulties. The social group is made up of more than minds: it is made up of persons having minds; of ideas in those minds, ideas which have an objective reference apart from those minds; and of things: tools or institutions which do not depend upon minds for their existence. To admit that a work of art has an intersubjective existence is tantamount to admitting that it has an objective existence independent of minds, just as a spade or a building has. Of course, the work of art, again like the spade or the building, may have originally come into existence occasioned by human agency; but this is another thing from saying that it depends *ontologically* upon that agency. Once existing, it may proceed to lead a life of its own, as for instance has been done by those works of art which have survived by many centuries the authors of their existence. In the narrower conception of the intersubjective relation, in which only minds are considered, aesthetic value is held to be a property which minds have in common. But here, as well, there is difficulty: who introduced it into those minds, and from where? Does the inherence of aesthetic value in those minds, from which after all it does differ somewhat, not give it a status independent of the minds in which it inheres? Aesthetic value is not itself the minds, it merely inheres in the minds. This introduces a distinction which cannot fail to have some meaning of its own; and to take this meaning seriously is to accord to aesthetic value some status of independence, however slight such independence may be.

But in any case, whether aesthetic value is subjective or intersubjective, and if intersubjective whether in the narrow conception or the broader, it does not escape the possibility of measurement. If aesthetic value is subjective, then it must stand comparison in two ways. The aesthetic value felt by

the individual varies from time to time: there can be a comparison of times. Values other than the aesthetic are felt by the individual: there can be a comparison of aesthetic value and other values. Now, wherever there is the possibility of comparison, there is the possibility of measurement. Not all commensuration is on a comparative basis, but all comparison admits of measurement. In the case of intersubjective aesthetic value, the same conditions hold true; for there is the possibility of comparison and hence of measurement in the different instances of aesthetic value and in the instances of aesthetic value and other values.

Hence the mere holding of aesthetic value as subjective does not mean that aesthetic value cannot be measured.

(2) It is asserted that aesthetic value is relative, a product of the relation between the appreciator and the work of art, and hence cannot be measured. The relativist position is a corollary of the Lockeian philosophy according to which there are primary qualities which are entirely physical, and secondary qualities which are those of the senses; the latter are added by the subject and are less real than the primary. In the absence of the subject there are atoms in motion and the void, or at best configurations of atoms in motion and the void, nothing else—certainly no aesthetic value. Aesthetic value appears, according to the relativists, when and only when a subject is confronted with a work of art. On that occasion aesthetic value arises, and it is neither a property of the subject nor of the work of art but only of the relation between them. But since, as we have noted, the aesthetic value disappears when the subject is not present, the relativist position slips back into the subjectivist position. The subjectivist position, as we saw, admits that there are works of art, too; but in the subjectivist theory

of aesthetic value the work of art does not seem to be so immediately required as it is in the relativist theory. A relativist with respect to aesthetic value is merely a subjectivist who remembers that there are works of art. As a subjectivist, he is answerable to the charges which were made in the foregoing criticism of the subjectivist position.

Although the relativist is truly a disguised subjectivist and vulnerable on those grounds, other arguments against the candid relativist position exist. There is, for instance, the argument from epistemology. We have noted that there is a certain statistical constancy to evaluations. Over a very long period, one which has been long enough to provide many generations of appreciators and spectators, a work of art tends to be regarded either as permanently good or as permanently bad (usually good, since the bad ones tend to be dropped from the role of object of art in the course of countless generations of appreciators and spectators). To what is this constancy of appreciation attached? Is it attached (as the relativists would be forced to persuade us to believe) to the subject? But epistomological and psychological facts will not permit such an attachment. There is change from human individual to human individual, and within a given human individual from moment to moment. On the other hand, no relativist has ever tried to persuade us that the object of art changes to any appreciable extent. Obviously, it is the perspective *on* the object which changes, for the object itself does not. But if these statements are true, then the only two constants discoverable are the evaluations of the object of art on the one hand and the object itself on the other. Hence the aesthetic value must be more closely related to the object than it is to either the subject or the relation between subject and object.

There is another argument against the relativism of aesthetic value which may be mentioned here, and this is the argument from logic. Those who advocate the relativism of aesthetic value must plead for the consistency of their position and the falsity of the contradictory position. That plea would be merely in accordance with the claims of any position which wished to justify itself rationally (and what position in philosophy does not?). But the logic to which such a position appeals is not a logic which is relative in the same sense in which the aesthetic value which it is called forth to defend is claimed to be relative. At least, not according to the relativist position which, as we saw, agrees with the Lockeian postulates; for in a world in which all reality and regulation inheres in atoms in motion, the principles of logic, which call for order and law, must be presumed to exist in the external world of matter rather than in the internal world of spirit, of evaluations—of sense values. But if value is relative while logic is objective, then what is logic the logic of? Locke's position leads to a skeletal world which no one can consistently accept. If logic is objective, then what gives relative aesthetic value its consistency? Not logic, surely, for logic has been grounded elsewhere. A relativist position with respect to aesthetic value cannot claim the justification of logical consistency unless it can show the relativism of logic as well.

We have endeavored to set forth some of the arguments against the validity of the relativist theory of aesthetic value. However, even if we were to retreat from the claims of the invalidity of the relativist position, it is difficult to see how this would make it any easier for the relativist to deny that aesthetic value can be measured. Relative aesthetic value would have to be relative to *something*, it could not be

merely arbitrary since that is not what 'relative' means. Any regularity introduced from whatever source: from the subject, from the object or even spontaneously from the relation, whenever subject and object are brought into proximity, would be susceptible of being measured, since it would have algebraic, geometric or analytic properties. Mathematics has the universal ability to apply to regularity wherever and whenever it appears and under whatever guise. It is not concerned with the development of things but only with their rate of change; it is not concerned with the properties of things but only with their amount. It operates on value in a manner which enables it to remain value-free, and this irrespective of the epistemological status of the value on which it operates. Hence whether aesthetic value be deemed relative, subjective or whatever, its susceptibility to measurement remains unchanged.

If aesthetic value is neither subjective nor relative, then on the basis of the division of possibilities into three mutually exclusive and exhaustive positions of subjective, relative and objective, it must be objective. The defense of the position which assumes that aesthetic value is objective is too long to pursue here. It is a task which has already occupied many volumes and will no doubt continue to occupy many more.[29] It must suffice here merely to reply to one of the most common objections to the objectivist theory of aesthetic value. Those who offer criticism are so deeply involved with the relativist position that they are often hardly even aware of its implications. For instance, they charged objectivism with *prospopoeia* in claiming that value is human and that to attribute it to the object of human perception is to endow that object with the characteristics of a living person. But

[29] See, *e.g.*, John Laird, *The Idea of Value* (Cambridge, 1929).

until there is actual empirical demonstration of the locus of aesthetic value, the onus of the proof lies just as heavily upon the subjectivist as it does upon the objectivists. None yet has a tangible demonstration. Nominalists are in fact accustomed to leveling such charges against all metaphysical realists; they are animists or anthropomorphists. The charge always assumes what it sets out to prove; namely, that there is a distinction in kind between the animate and the inanimate, between the living and non-living, between the human and the natural worlds. If there were such a breach, and if it were absolute and final, then of course it would be logical to assume that whatever human beings took from the world would have to be what they had previously put into it. In order to find aesthetic value in an object, they would first have to place it there by the act of perceiving and apprehending it, which is in point of fact just what the relativists do claim. The objectivists, on the other hand, insist that such a contention is self-refuting because contradictory. There is, they assert, no *prospopoeia* in attributing aesthetic value to an object, such that the value is retained when the object is not preceived or sensed in any way. Just as man is a product of the external world, and made from its material, so his knowledge, whether perceptual or conceptual is made, too, and everything indeed which he either is or possesses.

(3) It is asserted that aesthetic value is mystical and ineffable and so cannot be measured. Aesthetic value, this theory maintains, is a very rare and exotic phenomenon in the world, and as such cannot be treated in the prosaic and pedestrian fashion in which we tend to treat other axiologic phenomena.

But it is difficult to see how anything that occurs can fail to occur in definite amounts. Plato once observed that

everything which comes into existence is subject to the art of measurement. The rarity or subtlety of an existing thing does not prevent its existence from being a positive fact. To know that we had two ounces of the rarest, finest and most valuable perfume in the whole world would not prevent it from being rare, fine and valuable; and the same would be true of our knowledge of its constituents. There are no incommensurable elements, although incommensurable properties are recognized in mathematics. Surds are ultimately incommensurable, yet the indicated roots of numbers which can never be reached can yet be approximated. The truth is that *all* value and not merely aesthetic value is both mystical and ineffable. Physical force, although easy to measure, is yet physical force; and there is a sense in which it escapes all measurement. A mass-acceleration formula specified for a particular set of quantities at a particular date and place is still a formula and not itself a forceful effect. The force, the value, is a qualitative affair, which in a sense finally escapes all our endeavors to capture it in equations and text. And what is true of force or value in general is equally true of aesthetic value. The attempts to measure aesthetic value in no wise affect the quality which the aesthetic value possesses.

Of course, aesthetic value has not been measured as yet. This suggests to many persons that it has not because it cannot. But this is a false argument, more particularly it is the false argument of historicism. The past lays no prohibition on the present or the future. Every day, things are being done which had not been done before. Contrary to the old adage, there is something new in the world every instant. To read history as cause is simply to fall a prey to the fallacy of historicism. We have not measured aesthetic value; we can-

not measure aesthetic value. But perhaps we could and perhaps we will. If we never do, it will still be difficult to understand how the mystical and elusive aspects of aesthetic value could have been responsible for the failure. What is characterized as vague and intangible will probably prove to be difficult to measure; but what is difficult to measure is not necessarily impossible to measure. Aesthetic value, however mystical and ineffable, is still subject to the art of measurement.

(4) It is asserted that aesthetic value is in its very essence opposed to science and the mechanization which science entails, and hence cannot be measured. Those who would defend the incommensurability of aesthetic value on these grounds insist that art and science are not only different, they are actually opposed. Science means measurement, mechanism, automatism. Art means elusiveness, vitality, spontaneity. Hence art can never be a science, and to wish to measure aesthetic value is to try to make it over into something which it can never be. Thus aesthetic value cannot be measured.

The error in this position consists in the misunderstanding of the nature of science and of the scientific method. The scientist is not a robot any more than the artist is a divinely inspired creature who is set off from the rest of us and sacred, having nothing in common whatsoever with other mortals. The scientist works by intuition as well as by a recognized and circumscribed method, and the artist has a circumscribed method just as well as his special intuitions, even though his method be not so well recognized. There are no mechanical methods for the discovery of mechanisms. The scientist is in a sense a pioneer; and he must have a feeling for the truth as well as tools for its discovery. The scientist

is by no means what the artist supposes him to be: a prosaic creature, utterly lacking in feeling, a sort of robot custodian of the mechanical laboratory, going about his routine business by rote. But then neither is the artist what he supposes himself to be: a mad but superb creature, dependent only upon his own inspired gifts, bound by no rules, having nothing in common with anyone else, and absolutely perfect in his supernatural mission to bestow beauty upon the world, a beauty which he himself has created without any assistance.

If the scientist is no robot, neither is science entirely a mechanical affair. The discovery of mechanisms and of natural law does not mean that there are no forces, no chance spontaneity, in nature. Nature is purposive and energetic, and natural systems have their aims just as much as they have their systems. The teleological drive which the artist feels in his field is just as much present in other fields: the physical, the chemical or the biological, for instance. The mechanical systems which exist in the natural world are systems of directed energy; the laws of physics, for instance, are laws dealing with physical forces. Every field is a force-field of some sort; it is merely a question of the level of organization at which the force exists, and the higher the level the more subtle and tenuous the force. Aesthetic value is a force which is higher but then, too, more dependent than, say, mere physical energy. But the distinction is not sufficient to justify the absolute line which the artist and usually the aesthetician draws between science and art. The attempt to measure aesthetic value would not be intended to make a science of art. That would indeed be as impossible as it would be undesirable. Art is not science nor science art. Yet the difference between them is not sufficient to mean

that the use of mathematics is not desirable in both fields, either. So general is the possibility of the applications of mathematics that the use of mathematics in a field does not characterize that field or set it apart in any way.

Every human occupation upon which the living and reputation of some men depend has its professionals and hence its vested interests, and this is true of art no less than of other institutions. The artist is a professional who feels his vested interests challenged whenever he hears from others that there is a possibility that aesthetic value can be measured. He feels insecure and unsafe, and so he sets out elaborately to safeguard and ensure his position against all the challenges. This means denying the possibility of measuring aesthetic value and opposing every effort to do so. It is true that science and mathematics are very closely allied. But many things are measured which are not scientific, because assuredly science has no monopoly of measurement. To measure aesthetic value, or even to be able to measure the aesthetic value of specific works of art, would not make an art out of science. It would simply mean placing certain mathematical tools at the disposal of art, just as new materials are being placed at the disposal of art as fast as they are discovered and tested. Progress in art, the kind of progress which the use of mathematics might make possible, would not mean scientism in art; at least it would not *have* to mean that. The misunderstanding of science by those who are ignorant of its true nature and detached purpose and who understand only its utilitarian aspect at the lowest level, does not keep science from having another side; and the same would be true of art. There are those who would hasten to misunderstand and perhaps to misuse any connections which might be found between art and mathematics, but that

would be no good argument against proper understanding and use.

(5) It is asserted that aesthetic value is spiritual while mathematics is physical, and that hence aesthetic value cannot be measured. This theory, which is very close to the last one mentioned, insists that there is a qualitative difference between the area in which mathematics occurs and the area in which art occurs, and that hence the use of one in the area of the other is an impossibility, certain to produce absurd results when attempted. The area of art is the internal world of the psyche, whereas the area of mathematics is the external world of the physical. Mathematics applies to physics, so the argument runs, hence it cannot possibly apply to art.

The position which is thus maintained rests upon a distinction taken very seriously by all German philosophers, aestheticians and scientists between the natural sciences and the spiritual sciences, between *naturwissenschaften* and *geisteswissenschaften*. The distinction, of course, rests upon a simple assertion: it has never been demonstrated to be a valid one. Pragmatically, it probably rests upon the success of the physical sciences with the use of mathematics together with the corresponding failure *thus far* of the other sciences to avail themselves of mathematics. Metaphysically, however, the distinction has even deeper roots; it rests upon the dichotomy of the categories of mind and matter as ontological ultimates. Mind and matter are the two principal 'stuffs' according to this philosophy, differing radically in nature, and inherently requiring different kinds of treatment. The distinction between mind and matter is of course a valid one. But it is valid at the epistemological level only, not at the ontological. It is a metaphysical error because the one

requirement of metaphysical sets of categories is that they be exhaustive. Now this is just the requirement which the mind-matter set of metaphysical categories fails to meet. Universal propositions, for example, which are held in the mind as concepts, beliefs or thoughts, and which occur in the material world as regularities, uniformities and similarities, are at the same time neither mental nor material. Three metaphysical categories, not two, are required to be exhaustive.

If this position can be maintained, then it follows that the mind-matter distinction is invalid, the distinction between what can be done in the fields of *naturwissenschaften* and *geisteswissenschaften* will not hold up, and the assertion that mathematics being physical cannot apply to art which is spiritual proves nonsense.

All of the foregoing arguments, and not merely the last, are guilty of the same fallacy. They commit the fallacy of historicism, for they argue that what has not been done cannot be done. They would in this way erect occasion into necessity, history into cause, accident into logic, when they rely upon the proposition that the failure of the past represents the impossibility of the future. As we have seen in the case of the third position, a failure should not be erected into a prohibition. The pragmatic argument against this prohibition has great cogency: it is not good methodological procedure to close doors. If we absolutely accept the contention that aesthetic value cannot be measured, we shall certainly not make the attempt. While the failure of the attempt would not prove the impossibility of success, the success of the attempt would prove the possibility. It is better to try and to fail than not to try at all; because if we do not try we shall never succeed; whereas if we do try, we might. The history of the sciences and of philosophy is filled

with the record of achievements which had been conclusively demonstrated impossible. Art, wrote Elie Faure,

> . . . will succeed one day in conquering some impersonal instrument in the presence of which the personality of the sculptor or the painter will preserve the same importance as does the personality of the scientist armed with the algebraic symbol, the scales, the microscope, and the crucible.[30]

The progress of human culture is not marked by the pronouncements of prohibitions but rather by the achievement of the 'impossible.'

(6) It is asserted that since aesthetic value is what we enjoy in art, to measure would be to analyze and to deprive us of that very enjoyment for which we go to art. Hence aesthetic value should not be measured even if it could be. This argument is not against the possibility of measuring aesthetic value but against the desirability. We go to art for enjoyment, not knowledge. To destroy the thing we love would not be to gain anything.

But of course such a contention would never be put forth were it not for a mistaken conception of what measurement means. To measure is to analyze, and to analyze is to destroy, to be sure; but the end-product more than justifies the means. The analysis of a thing often leads to control over that type of thing, and measurement is a form of mastery. Mathematics might have to destroy a number of works of art for purposes of analysis in order that we might learn more about aesthetic value; but after it had done so, measurement might become one of the tools of the practicing artist, and might in this way lead to the production of greater art. If it did so, the procedure employed in arriving at this point would

[30] Elie Faure, *The Spirit of the Forms*, trans. W. Pach, (New York, 1937), p. 244.

be more than justified. In other words, the measurement of aesthetic value is not a qualitative method of producing the enjoyment of art, but it might be an *effective* one. While we are measuring we are not enjoying, but after we have measured, what we can do with our measurements might produce greater enjoyment. The dentist's drill does hurt worse than chewing with a sore tooth, but the result is the ability to chew without any pain at all. Rationality is not feeling or value, but it is complementary and not opposed to it. The analysis of mechanisms employed in physical motion was a process that did not move as fast as a horse and buggy, yet the result has been the fast motion made possible by the automobile and the airplane. The prospect of art is more dazzling even than the history of art; but there may have to be a prosaic interval during which we are occupied with tools, methods, and various inartistic devices and activities, before we can make the kind of progress in art which is at least a possibility.

We have seen, then, that none of the arguments against the measurement of aesthetic value has any validity. We have probably not exhausted the list of arguments, but we have examined typical ones and we have found them wanting. Before we turn to have a glance at the prospect of the measurement of aesthetic value, we may review very quickly some of the efforts, unsuccessful on the whole, which in the past have been devoted to the problem of the measurement of value.

II

The attempt to measure value is as old as the mythological history of philosophy—and as recent as yesterday. No success has been achieved thus far, but would the attempts be so

persistent were there nothing there to work on? This argument on rational grounds is not worth much, it is true, but enough light has been let into the darkness to show that the space in the room does not itself consist in darkness but in vaguely discernible features. Then the curtain of darkness is drawn again and we feel somewhat baffled. The faith of those of us who persist in the effort is that someday we shall draw the curtain back a good way and see the complex arrangement which actually does exist in the room.

The first evidence on record of the attempt to measure aesthetic value is that of Pythagoras. The knowledge and researches which are attributed to him report him as having sought the clue to such measurements in the art which comes the closest to being mathematical in its treatment and availability, namely, music. Pythagoras is credited with the discovery of the harmonic interval, and also with the 'consonances,' by measuring the lengths of strings on the monochord. The discovery of mathematical relations in musical sounds is surely the first and most primitive step in the direction of aesthetic measure, but it is most assuredly a step. The whole complex theory of harmony, as we have it today, is in a sense a small portion of aesthetic value measured in the musical field.

Whether Pythagoras did or did not believe that things have numbers, he is credited with the belief, as are his followers. And Aristotle is credited with having charged him with the further belief that things *are* numbers. Now, obviously, there is literally a world of metaphysical difference between the two propositions. To say that things have numbers is merely to say that they are commensurable. To say that they *are* numbers is to make of mathematics a kind of essence, and a final ontological essence at that. This is in

all likelihood the kind of unconscious error of attribution which is so common among opponents who wish to make the position under attack easier to refute. A great haze of ignorance and superstition hangs over the memory of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans and what they did and did not believe. It is too late to rescue him from misinterpretation just as it is too late to condemn him. Suffice to say that the first hint of the belief in such truths (as well as such errors) is generally credited to Pythagoras and his followers. He, it is said, went further than music for he thought of cosmological entities as having numbers, entities such as the soul, justice and even opportunity.[31]

The early books of Euclid probably owe a good deal to Pythagoras. Certainly the now famous "golden section" [32] of a line into mean and extreme ratios is Pythagorean in flavor. The latter Pythagorean school did what schools usually do: they permitted the extreme and literal interpretation—or as we had better call it, misinterpretation—of the doctrine to preempt the name and the attention of the true doctrine; in this case, it meant that the proposition that numbers are the souls of things was allowed to take precedence over the more credible doctrine that all things have their numbers. But, in any case, Pythagoras must be given credit for first associating numbers with things, so that aesthetic objects, such as works of art, being things, have numbers also.

The Pythagoreans had a strong effect upon Plato; they may have been responsible for his mathematical bent. Plato stated the mathematical ideas in relation to the aesthetic in

[31] Diels, Zeller and Burnet are all good authorities for the knowledge that is current concerning Pythagoras and his school.

[32] Euclid, *Elements*, iv. ii.

no uncertain terms. He said that "all things which come within the province of art do partake in some sense of measurement" [33] and that "measure and symmetry are everywhere identified with beauty." [34] He admitted the difficulty in the way of solving the problem, and recognized that beauty is "soft, smooth and slippery" [35] but nevertheless made an attempt in the direction of aesthetic-value-measurement when he recognized that there are grades of beauty, and took cognizance of its nature as a universal science.[36] Just as Pythagoras may be given credit for having discovered the possibility of aesthetic measure, so Plato may be given credit for having set it up *as* a possibility. Certainly Plato is the first speculator whose actual words concerning such a possibility have been preserved.

There have not been as many Platonists in the history of philosophy as is commonly supposed, and the ones that there have been were too busy defending the basic realism of Plato's ontology to be able to develop any of his ideas concerning the possibility of a science of aesthetic value measurement. The Platonic tradition so-called is a long, popular and almost continuous one. But what is called Platonism in most cases turns out on inspection to be not Platonism at all but neo-Platonism. The difference between the Platonist and the neo-Platonist concerns the amount of reality accorded to the realm of universals and values, to the Ideas. The Platonist admits no distinction or difference with respect to reality between possible and actual things; the idea of chairness and this singular green chair are alike in

[33] *Statesman*, 285.
[34] *Philebus*, 64 E.
[35] *Lysis*, 216 C.
[36] *Symposium*, 210.

respect to their possession of reality, so far as the Platonist is concerned. But with the neo-Platonist it is different. The neo-Platonist holds that the realm of possibility contains a superior reality, so that actuality with its things of sense merely furnishes us with shadows of the superior and possible real. Plato's writings contain both types of philosophy, though the former type, which is what we now know as realism, is the rarer. Those who would measure aesthetic value find that they have implicitly subscribed to a belief in the former philosophy. But the history of European philosophy after the Romans, which proves to be in large a history of Christian philosophy, followed neo-Platonism rather than what for want of a better term we may call Platonism; and hence instances of the attempts and desires to measure aesthetic value are few and far between, where indeed they exist at all.

The introduction of the theory of harmony early in the eighteenth century by Rameau and its development later by the mathematician, Euler, together with Poe's attempt to work out a prosody and the later development of his efforts by Sylvester, initiate for the two arts of music and poetry the technique of mathematical analysis, and the approach to a full mathematical treatment. These techniques have since become more or less standard, although they have not yet developed very much beyond the ground gained at their origins. The other arts, however, lack even this much mathematical treatment, and the whole subject of the measurement of aesthetic value as such remained vague.

Specific attempts to measure aesthetic value or at least to provide an approach to the problem, dates, so far as can be at present ascertained, from fairly recent times. The theory of aesthetics as itself a separate study is not so very old, and

the outlines of a science of aesthetics are even younger. Aesthetics was hardly considered a distinct field of inquiry until Baumgarten named it in the middle of the eighteenth century. The physicist and the psychologist, Helmholtz, toward the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, published experimental work on the theory of optics and tone sensation which reverberated in artistic circles for many years and helped to give the study of aesthetics its modern, subjective interpretation. In 1851, Gottfried Semper attempted in art theory to work in much the same direction as Helmholtz, with the establishment of the idea of a *Kunstwissenschaft* or science of art. He recognized the task of the aesthetician as that of discovering order and laws in his field. In 1879 the Canadian, Grant Allen, sought a method of studying the color sense through a physiological approach to the science of aesthetics, and in 1885 a Frenchman named Charles Henry attempted to work the same vein in a scientific publication on aesthetics which sought the unconscious mathematics which, he held, underlies our sense of beauty. In 1893 Alois Riegl of Vienna published a book which followed the lead established by Semper. Riegl, a curator of art, held that the work of art, the art object, must be central to any conception of a science of art; but this sound theory was much diluted with another hypothesis of the mystical nature of aesthetic value. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a Scottish housepainter named David Ramsay Hay, with a conception of mathematical aesthetics derived from Pythagoras, endeavored to arrive at the principles of aesthetics by a method of painstaking measurements of existing works of classical Greek examples of architecture, sculpture and vases. On analogy from the theory of harmony in music, he attempted to assign ratios to the color scale; and

in this and related ways sought to establish a "science of beauty." The American, D. W. Ross, early in the twentieth century, made a study of the arts, from which he deduced that design is the method of art which brings order to beauty.

He was followed by another Canadian, Jay Hambidge, author of the conception of "dynamic symmetry." Hambidge and his followers, whose work has been very much neglected in all subsequent discussions of aesthetic theory, attempted to demonstrate with concrete examples taken from the history of art both ancient and modern, that the incommensurability of line as found throughout nature when compressed into a commensurability of area yields a symmetry whose dynamic character gives an impression of movement and of life. This theory he related to the various previous proportions: the golden section of .62, the logarithmic spiral, the Fibonacci series, the regular geometric solids, etc. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, Colman, the painter and Coan, his collaborator, led a host of followers of Hambidge in endeavoring to study further and to put into practice his principles. But then the movement died abruptly, and most subsequent attempts to measure aesthetic value have turned back to the psychological and physiological approach.[37]

The American philosopher, Charles S. Peirce, while admitting that he had a blind spot so far as the appreciation of works of art were concerned, yet envisaged the possibility of a science of aesthetics, based on his essential metaphysical realism. Peirce considered that aesthetics could become a science, albeit a normative rather than an empirical science,

[37] A good bibliography and discussion of the work of the writers mentioned in the above two paragraphs is to be found in Horace M. Kallen, *Art and Freedom* (New York, 1942, Duell, Sloan and Pearce), 2 vols., especially vol. ii.

even though there was not so very much difference between them. He did not, however, consider the task of rendering aesthetics scientific an easy or rewarding one. To work on the relation between aesthetics and the new world created by science would bring no recognition, and perhaps at first not even a hearing, Peirce declared.[38]

One of the latest attempts to measure value was that of the Harvard mathematician, George D. Birkhoff. He followed in the Ross tradition, but relied upon psychological criteria for judgments of formal beauty. But, as we have already seen, personal taste, judgment or opinion, is not a fair canon in the matter of objective beauty any more than it is a reliable guide to anything else except the psychological person. Psychological or so-called experimental aesthetics, such as was developed by Fechner, where the experiments are conducted upon the persons of the spectators or appreciators, is a measure of the psychology of taste or of aesthetic appreciation. It is not a sufficient lead for aesthetic measure, any more than a statistical estimate of the preference of physicists for one type of subatomic particle over another would yield any further knowledge concerning the structure of matter. We want to know what the objective thing, beauty, is, not what the appreciators of beauty may or may not prefer.

The difficulty with all of the foregoing efforts is that they have not gone far enough. The task of those who would prepare the ground for a new science is to bring the hypotheses, in the field which the science proposes to study, to the point where they are ready and prepared for mathematical treatment. This involves profound analysis. There

[38] See *Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce* (Cambridge, 1931-5, Harvard University Press), especially 5.551, 1.383, and 5.513.

have been many cases of studies which failed to become sciences because they remained on the common-sense level, but there have been also cases of studies which failed to become sciences because mathematics was introduced before the formulation of abstractions was ready for it. An instance of the former is sociology and of the latter the pleasure-pain calculus of Edgeworth and Jevons. Aesthetics is a branch of the social, at least so far as empirical formulations are concerned. This inevitably means that its equations and texts are sure to be more complex than the equations and texts of the physical, the chemical, the biological or the psychological. All mathematical approaches to aesthetics that we have noticed are too simple; they are very nearly at the level of enlightened common sense, whereas aesthetic entities and relationships when these are properly analyzed should be found at a very deep analytical level. It is possible that a start has been made and that some of the formulas and analyses which have already been made will fit into a more advanced and complex scheme. At any rate, aesthetics will never become a science until it has discovered its abstractions at a level sufficiently profound to support the introduction of mathematical formulations. In all likelihood that day has not yet arrived. If not, we can at least work toward it. Aesthetics is a field at the culture level of empirical organization. This fact means that its analysis can never be a simple affair. A society and its institutions are not simple or elementary; they are exceedingly complex, and their analysis must yield such a maze of parts and interrelations as to give those pause who are convinced that the task of analyzing them can be accomplished. Yet, as we have seen in the first part of this chapter, nothing is to be gained from supposing that it cannot be done and something may be gained from supposing

that it can. Therefore, as a mere operational procedure if for no other reason, we must proceed on the assumption that the measurement of aesthetic value is feasible.

III

The measurement of aesthetic value admits of a number of approaches to the problem. We shall consider five of them though only in a brief and sketchy manner. First in the order of consideration must come (1) the question of definition. What is aesthetic value? It will be necessary then to examine (2) the terms essential to the quantitative analysis of aesthetic value, together with the hypothetical employment of these terms in a system of measurement. After that we shall inspect (3) some examples of the application of our analytical conceptions to actual works of art. Some related problems will also be due for discussion, problems such as those concerning the quantitative theory of the art in general. One approach to our problem will be to take up (4) the question of the hierarchical relation between the arts: in what order do the various arts belong? In addition to this logical problem, there is an historical one. Thus we shall look into (5) the quantitative aspect of the historical development of the arts: some arts have developed faster than others and some have gone further. Is there such a thing as progress in the history of art? These five problems and their suggested approaches if not solutions will constitute the third and last part of this chapter.

(1) When we come to a definition of aesthetic value, we find that there is already a single term for it which has been current for many centuries. This term is beauty. Beauty and aesthetic value are for practical purposes identical and interchangeable terms. Thus a definition of beauty will be a def-

inition of aesthetic value. In order to define beauty we shall require an understanding of four other terms; these are: *affection, whole, part, organization.* By *affection* here is meant a force or feeling, something which has an effect. A *whole* is that which contains parts. A *part* is that which is contained within a whole. An *organization* is a system of whole and part or parts in relation to each other, in the light of some direction or purpose. *Beauty*, then, *is the qualitative aspect of the perfect relation of parts to whole within an organization.* The terms which occur in this definition which have not yet been discussed separately are: *aspect, perfect* and *relation.* Every organization has two *aspects:* the qualitative and the logical, or, to use an older terminology for a similar conception, its form and content. We are dealing here with content rather than form, assuming always of course that the amount of content is limited by the form and that the form is the form of the content, or that the qualitative is that which the *relation* limits and the relation that which limits the qualitative. By *perfect* here is meant completely formed and faultless. In other words, our definition means that a beautiful object is one which closely approaches the ideal of an organization in which the parts fit most perfectly into the whole. When there is harmony in the whole, a harmony, we might say, bestowed upon the whole by the fitting of its parts and the absence of superfluous parts or ill adjustments of necessary parts, then there is a beauty of the whole. The qualitative aspect of perfect relationship is evidently what Plotinus was trying to describe when he said that beauty is more like the light that plays over the symmetry of things than it is like that symmetry itself. This beauty, of course, is not given off by the parts

but by the whole; it is an aura which the whole emanates when there is no dissension among its parts.

(2) Our definition and explanation of what is meant by beauty has left us with a basic conception in terms of whole-part organization. We may pursue the meaning of these terms and their relations in the second part of our problem. The whole functioning and indeed the basic structure of organization hangs upon the whole-part relation. It is too long a story to recite here, even though it is relevant.[39]

Any work of art may be viewed as a whole, that is, in quasi-isolation from its environment. This is true, whatever art the work of art under consideration may belong to. The whole work of art possesses parts, and the parts possess subparts. The parts are related according to one or more of the following relations (or its absence): transitivity, connexity, symmetry, seriality, correlation, addition, multiplication, commutation, association, distribution, dependence. These with their negatives constitute twenty-two relations. In addition to these relations, there are eight rules: structure is the sharing of subparts between parts; organization is the controlling order of structure; an organization is one level higher than its parts; a serial relation must exist in every organization; all parts are shared parts; anything in an organization and related to its parts is itself a part of the organization; anything in an organization related to its related parts is itself a part; complexity is made up of the number of parts and of their relations.

We now have two rules for every organization; namely, that it must have one serial relation, and that its complexity

[39] But see James Feibleman and Julius W. Friend, "The Structure and Function of Organization" in *The Philosophical Review*, LIV, 1 (1945), no. 319, p. 19, where the system which is partly applied in the following paragraphs is extended and explained in detail.

is made up by the number of its parts and their relations. Seriality is defined in all the logic books as consisting of three essential properties, which are in effect three other relations: transitivity, asymmetry and connexity. A serial relation, then, is one which if it relates two extreme parts to a middle part, relates the two extremes to each other (transitivity): which involves a change in the relation when there is an interchange of parts (asymmetry); and which relates two parts without the mediation of a third part (connexity). There are various degrees of organization which may be distinguished on the basis of their integrality; but since works of art are, next to living beings, the most integral of known actual organizations, it follows that we do not need to consider any but the most integral of organizations when we consider the organizations of works of art.[40] The most integral organization is the complemental, and is characterized by the governing relation of symmetrical dependence, *i.e.*, the sharing of its parts is necessary to all shared parts (and all its parts are shared parts), which means that parts are on a parity with respect to their relations with other parts. The work of art is lesser in these respects than the living organism. The human arm, for instance, cannot as an arm survive its separation from the human body, whereas the arm of a statue, let us say, could survive such separation, albeit not as a work of art. In this way the parts of a work of art are *qua* work of art on a parity with respect to dependence. We shall term this feature of the integrality of a complemental organization its integrality-property.

[40] It should be remembered that by works of art throughout this book is meant works of fine art. In considering works of art other than works of fine art, works such as chairs, factories, pencils, dinners, *etc.*, structures of organizations of lesser degrees of integrality would have to be introduced. In that case, and for further study, see Feibleman and Friend, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

The intensity-breadth coordinates are composed of two factors: intensity and breadth. The intensity of an organization is the *compactness* of the material which it manages to include; the breadth is the *amount* of the material which it manages to include. By intensity is intended nothing psychological, although of course such intensity may be psychologically felt by an appreciating subject. For the intensity which the appreciating subject may feel actually is a property of the organization of the work of art. Intensity arises when values are packed; breadth, when there is much value included which must be packed.

(3) We now have four separate items or tools, sets of co-ordinates for the measurement of the aesthetic value in a given work of art. These are: (*a*) its seriality, (*b*) its complexity-dimensions, (*c*) its integrality-property, and (*d*) its intensity-breadth co-ordinates. But before we can attempt to 'measure' the value of an art object, we shall have to clear up one more difficulty. We have either to select a unit of measurement, since thus far we have none, or we shall have to make our measurements consist in a comparison between two works of art, considering one of them as having more (or less) of the properties we have named. Since the former task is the more difficult of the two, and might require a greater knowledge of mathematics than we can at present command for the purpose, perhaps it would be better and just as illustrative to undertake the easier of our two alternatives.

Let us consider for the purpose at hand two paintings by Van Gogh. One is a self-portrait, the one with the bandaged ear; the other is the still-life of sunflowers.[41]

[41] The former reposes in the Courtauld Institute of Art, and the latter in the Tate Gallery, both in London.

(*a*) As to the serial relation, we have seen that a serial relation is a triadic transitive relation made up of units of connected, irreversible dyads. In the self-portrait, the serial relation is composed of the relation between the parts which give the meaning of the expression in the face, aided, of course, by the bandage and the clothing, in contrast to the gaiety of the background. In the sunflowers, the serial relation is composed of the central grouping of the sunflowers and the relations between them as parts of a single organization, blending this time rather than contrasting with the background.

(*b*) As to their respective complexity-dimensions, by counting parts, subparts and relations (denoted by bounded surfaces), we get for parts, self-portrait, 6; sunflowers, 18; and for subparts, self-portrait, 41; sunflowers, 50; and, finally, for relations, self-portrait, 41; sunflowers, 50. This makes a total of self-portrait, 88; sunflowers, 118.

(*c*) As to the integrality-property, we have not yet learned to distinguish subtleties of difference between great works of art, though it would be easy to show the diminished integrality of an amateur work. Both the examples under consideration are complemental organizations in that no part would have much meaning without the whole, all parts being shared parts.

(*d*) As to intensity-breadth co-ordinates, let us consider first intensity. Here, no doubt, color enters into the question. The sombreness of the self-portrait, in contrast to its background, is accentuated by the use of cool colors: green and blue; whereas its background, as well as the entire sunflowers painting are done in warm colors. The background of the self-portrait contains warm tones of red, and the entire sunflowers is done in warm yellow colors. These could be assigned values from the spectral scale or other color scales. As

to other questions of intensity, as well as questions of breadth, these no doubt concern *amount of meaning:* what do the pictures as wholes say? On a hazarded guess, the self-portrait has more meaning than the sunflowers, on the assumption that there is more expression in the human face. However, this is by no means conclusive and there is nothing commensurate to support it. Certainly, a cameo differs from a large polychrome easel painting in what both attempt, in sheer amount of inclusiveness quite apart from mere physical size. At such extremes we can detect differences in breadth. We can detect differences in intensity between mere decorative art, say, and the work of the great painters like Rembrandt and Velasquez. To take two more modern examples, the work of the Mexican painters, Rivera and Orozco, differ in that Rivera's work seems to depend upon its decorative quality, whereas Orozco's work is both broader *and* more intense. Critics, however, will not all agree on this last comparison. In any case, we do not yet have the standards of exact comparison, even though we can make extreme comparisons safely. But the measurements of aesthetic value will have to wait until we can be sure that our four sets of criteria are sufficient and until we can devise the means for rendering them in quantitative terms. The beginnings of some success in the accomplishment of this task should not have to wait long.

(4) We have thus far been considering the problem of the measurement of aesthetic value *in* the arts. Now let us take up the problem of the measurement of aesthetic value *between* the arts. The sciences have long been recognized as belonging to a system. That is because the relation between the sciences has been easy to detect. Each science builds with the units of the one below it, so that a hierarchy or system of

order is formed based on the criterion of increased complexity. Evidently no such criterion exists in the arts. Each art is just as complex and just as capable of becoming a vehicle for the highest forms of actual expression and communication of aesthetic value as the next. We shall have to look elsewhere for a criterion if we wish to range the arts on any kind of scale, which task is presumably our first one.

The usual criterion for a logical hierarchy or system of order of the arts has been that of the human senses. Particular arts appeal to particular senses: we can see painting but not hear it, we can hear music but not see it. According to psychologists, the visual sense takes precedence in the order of importance to the human individual over the auditory sense; but in many respects music is a more developed art than painting, at least it is so far as its detectable mathematical relations are concerned. What does this mean? Does it mean that music is to be ranked before or above painting as an art? But such an argument does not make good sense primarily because it rests upon a false criterion. The psychological criterion involves subjective appreciation and perhaps also, as it is called, 'creation.' The arts stand on their own ground, and it is ground which does not depend upon the way in which it came into existence or its fate as evaluation or appreciation. What we make and later appreciate is, after it is made, independent of such making and such appreciation. We shall have to seek for a more objective ground than that which is provided for us by the human senses.

Let us, then, turn to examine the arts themselves, in order to see what their particular fields of endeavor are.

It is clear that the field with which sculpture is concerned is that of space. Given a definition of art in general, it is possible to say that sculpture is that art which deals with spatial

relations. The material in terms of which it does so is matter itself. Music is concerned with time, and the material in terms of which it does so is that of sound vibrations. Similarly, *music* is that art which deals with the temporal relations of sound vibrations. The dance is concerned with motion, and the material in terms of which it does so is the human body. The *dance* is that art which deals with the motions of the human body. Painting is concerned with quality, and the materials in terms of which it does so are color pigments and two-dimensional space. *Painting* is that art which deals with the colors (qualities) of two-dimensional space. Architecture is concerned with space in relation to human social institutions, and the materials in terms of which it does so are those varieties of matter having the highest tensile strength (*i.e.*, those containing the least strain and capable of supporting the highest stress). *Architecture* is that art which deals with the spatial relations of social institutions. Poetry is concerned with the temporal and auditory relations of language, and the material in terms of which it does so is the social institution of human speech. *Poetry* is that art which deals with the temporal and auditory relations of language by means of the social institution of human speech. The drama is concerned with human social relations, and the material in terms of which it does so is the staged spectacle of life-situations. The *drama* is that art which deals with the human social relations of life-situations. It should at once be noted that we have not included all the arts but only the traditional seven. It should also be noted that two of these arts, namely, music and poetry, emphasize the quantitative by means of established rhythm: music in the established rhythm of sound, and poetry in the established rhythm of the sound of language.

If we take the order in which we have listed the arts to be

the order of their importance, it becomes clear that the c terion which we have employed is that of the relative posit of the empirical field which the arts are engaged in explori And the hierarchy of empirical fields is that which acce complexity as its criterion. The physical, the biological, psychological and the social are, roughly, the chief empiri fields. We see, then, that the arts at the lower end of scale deal with physical relations exclusively (*e.g.*, sculptur then with physical relations together with *their* relations the social but with the emphasis on the former (*e.g.*, arc tecture), and finally the arts which deal primarily with physical relations together with *their* relations to the so but with the emphasis on the latter (*e.g.*, poetry), a finally, with the social alone (*e.g.*, the drama). There further complications which may be still higher (*e.g.*, po drama) but it is inexpedient to complicate the analysis f further in this place. A hierarchy of any kind among arts is a difficult enough one with which to deal.

Of course, no attempt to arrange the arts in any kind order can be used as a measure of present or past achie ment among the arts. Only a naive interpretation (actu amounting to a misinterpretation) would be foolish eno to compare particular works in one art with those in anotl The hypothesis (for it is only an hypothesis, as yet noth more) which is here expounded makes no attempt to as that any art has gone or not gone further than any ot in its development. Even if such a thing could be showr would not be relevant to the present hypothesis. For *rate of progress* in the arts has no bearing on the *rela logical status* of the arts. We may clarify this point by analogy from the sciences. The empirical field of the phys stands lowest in the hierarchy of the empirical fields v

regard to the criterion of complexity; yet the physical has made more progress than any other science, in all probability because its task, despite the enormous difficulties, is comparatively simpler than those of the others. The situation may just possibly be the same in the arts, or it may not; the question requires much further study. Devotees of particular arts will quite naturally be outraged at the attempt to institute comparisons (odious for all arts except that assigned the very leading place). Artists in general shrink visibly at the mere mention of a yardstick. However, there is no reason why the topic should not be viewed dispassionately. If the lead is a wrong one, the attempt will come to nothing; but if it is not and the attempt were never made, we would not be able to know. Thus it seems to be one worthy of careful consideration.

(5) So much for the logical approach. There is still one more possible, and it is the last one which we shall have to consider. This is the historical. What can we learn from a history of the arts? History, as Toynbee has so well indicated in his *A Study of History*, has not continued and been recorded long enough to reveal any well-established tendencies. Of cultures considered as species we do not have sufficient examples to support any sound generalizations. The detection of a direction in the history of art, therefore is crippled at the start. The only arts of which representative examples have survived for us are the plastic arts (particularly sculpture, bas-relief and vase painting) and architecture. Surely, these are not the only arts whose examples have merited survival; and the fact that they alone have succeeded in preserving some of their work down to our own times is a peculiarity of the materials in which they work. The soundwaves of Greek music together with the extraordinary paint-

ings they must have done have almost entirely perished. This has left us without the continuity which any kind of comparison would require.

Can we afford to say, therefore, that there has been progress in art? And what would such a proposition mean? Would it mean progress (*a*) in the use of materials in art, (*b*) in the techniques of art, or (*c*) in the intensity and breadth of inclusiveness of works of art? Let us give a word to each of these questions.

(*a*) There certainly has without doubt been definite progress in the use of materials in art. Due to modern chemistry, the painter has colors and materials unknown before. Modern technology in physics has produced musical instruments that are entirely new, such as the saxophone and the novachord. It is doubtful whether the ancient world knew anything to compare to the Renaissance violin and its overtones. In architecture, the use of new materials of a light weight and high tensile strength makes possible a greater malleability of shapes and a greater scope in building. The examples are endless of the progress in the availability of artistic materials. We recognize, of course, that progress in art materials does not necessarily mean progress in art. It is what is done with the materials and not the materials themselves that matters. But the materials are nevertheless the means that makes progress possible even if not insuring it.

(*b*) There has been progress, too, in the techniques of art. Complicated musical forms and elaborate orchestrations as we have them today certainly must be more advanced than the music of the pre-Christian civilizations. Can we hold that those lines incised on bone and on the stone walls of caves with which primitive man evidently began his art career, are on a par with respect to technique with the frieze from the

Parthenon? Of course, progress in technique, like progress in materials, would not have to be in a straight line of uninterrupted progress. There are periods in history which seem explicitly designed for the forgetting of all that has been so painfully learned through the ages; surely such times do not aid progress in art from any point of view. But even periods of retrogression do not militate against a dialectical progress. The river which at certain points flows back toward the hills nevertheless does eventually reach the sea. We can appreciate how difficult it is to indicate a straight line progress when we see Picasso taking a hint from the art of primitive man and endeavoring to present motion statically in painting, stirred on now by the cinematograph. Modern mechanical methods of reproduction have such a deadly accuracy that the artist is forced to return to something akin to the abstractions of the primitive, though with a deliberate abstractness that the primitive surely lacked.

With the notion of abstraction, art has freed itself from the limitations imposed by naturalism and representationalism. Earlier it has freed itself from the rigid restrictions imposed by a naive interpretation of geometric symmetry as uniformity. Sculpture has freed itself from the limitations imposed by the law of frontality and the ideal median line. Perhaps there will be other equally important discoveries, discoveries as important as perspective; though not without periods of retrogression. In techniques, the modern artist far surpasses his remote predecessors, even though it is what he does with his equipment and not the equipment itself, consisting in materials and techniques, that counts.

(*c*) The question of progress in intensity and breadth is the heart of the problem of progress in art. If sheer physical size is any criterion, then some arts do show progress.

The drama has retrogressed from trilogies of the Greeks to the modern play, although it showed progress in all probability up to that time. But on the other hand, the Gothic cathedral and the modern skyscraper are larger than earlier periods of building. Music has retrogressed since the eighteenth century, though it advanced up to that point. If we take the sweep of history from the earliest periods about which anything is known to the modern period (about which not everything is known), there seems to be an unsteady, slight but nevertheless sure, dialectical progression. This progress can be seen despite periods of artistic decay and despite apparently steady retrogression in some arts. To say that a Rembrandt or a Velasquez is more beautiful than one of the animal drawings of prehistoric man which was incised upon the walls of a cave in what is now southern France or Spain, is not to say that the cave drawings are not works of art or that they are not beautiful in their own right. A work of art is perfect in relation to what it sets out to do; by being a work of art, one might say, it sets out perforce to do a lot, and any and every successful work of art does it. The cave drawings are deliberate works of art and as such are beautiful.

But are they *as* beautiful as the Rembrandt or the Velasquez? This is the heart of the question of progress in art. The question, as we have seen, has two parts, which we may treat under the names of intensity and breadth. The amount of aesthetic value in a given work of art has a co-ordinate of intensity and one of breadth. How intensely is the aesthetic value compressed and how much of it is contained? Now we may hazard the opinion (recognizing all the while that it is an opinion) that great works of art do not vary as to their intensity but do vary as to their breadth. The cave drawing, the primitive African mask, the Aztec obsidian

carving, the Rodin bronze, all share an intensity of value which enables them to be considered as front rank works of art in the first place. Thus no criticism is involved in the assertion that some of these artists have set themselves more inclusive and hence more difficult tasks than have others. It it easier, perhaps, to make a small thing perfect than a big thing. Had the frescoes of Rivera and Orozco the same intensity as a small Van Gogh canvas, they would be that much greater. But in general they have not; the limitations of the artist as actual human being to some extent dictates that every increase in ambition is accompanied by a slight decrease in achievement. The cameo made by the great artist is more perfect than the fresco made by the artist equally great.

But it is difficult to see how the possibility of progress in art, which the artist has come so traditionally to deplore even *as* a possibility, could fail to be the hope of the future, quite irrespective of whether there has been progress in the art of the past and present or not. Do we not wish to see art a greater thing than it is? Are we not blinded by the spectacle of the huge potentialities of art, were there to be progress in art, on a system of building upon what has already been done, such as takes place in science? The dazzling spectacle of the future is so bright that we are almost forced to avert our eyes; yet it is one, too, that we would wish to witness.

Beauty is, as Sir Joshua Reynolds so wisely saw, and as Plato before him, not an existent but a goal toward which all existences reach—the modern Reynolds as early as the eighteenth century added "grow" to Plato's "reach"—toward which all existences grow. And aesthetic appreciation is supported by the same approximation toward a goal, the same

dialectic but asymptotic approach to the appreciation of perfect beauty. Through the enormous instances provided by the successive generations, statistical probability guarantees that time shall approximate to true value; and this is no less true of aesthetic value than it is of other forms of value. The chances of the work of a great artist being recognized and remembered are good and tend to increase whether good or not. This statement, of course, means nothing so far as the fate of any single individual artist is concerned. The prediction of a single instance is disallowed in probability theory. But the aggregate population of instances is not; and as time goes on, the chances are that greater work will be done in the arts, work greater in scope, and aided by materials and techniques such as the actual world has never known before; and a greater faculty of appreciation will be there to meet it. In the service of this ambition, this hope and this goal, the technique of aesthetic measure is an indispensable prerequisite.

Part II

SOME EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE IN THE FINE ARTS

THE aim of this Part is to illustrate the systematic philosophy of art set forth in the preceding Part. How does the theory of art we have been expounding actually work itself out in practice? To answer this question the theory must be shown in application in each one of the seven arts; and moreover, it must be shown as fair samples of them. Accordingly, a chapter is devoted to each art, and the artists and their work selected are deliberately random, since the technique of the fair sample depends upon this procedure. It should be emphasized that such exemplification does not constitute a proof, but is merely corroborative evidence. This seems to be as far as the analysis of art can go at the present time.

Chapter X

THE DEFINITION OF POETRY

WHAT is poetry? The name is currently bestowed upon the products of one of the oldest professions. Yet there does not exist a satisfactory definition of poetry. The lack is partly due to inherent difficulties: an acquaintance with the true essences of complex things is not attained without considerable effort. It is also, and more recently, due to indifference: among the arts the estimation of qualitative experience has risen while that of rational understanding has declined. Everyone knows what poetry is yet no one seems able or willing to say. The experiences with poetry have made us more familiar with its values than with its logic. The art of definition is an ancient one, but, paradoxically, outside of the exact sciences of physics and mathematics it is held to be philosophical and therefore medieval —unsuited to modern scientific procedures. The poets and the prosodists have their own professional reasons for evading definition. They feel that poetry is a kind of value, and that in the process of analysis, all values escape and are lost. Besides, the task is very difficult. It is much easier and almost

equally important to distinguish among the various elements of poetry and to know poetry by those elements.

The need for a logical understanding remains, however, and perennially haunts us, because the explanations offered are not satisfactory. To those who fear that definition is medieval it must be stated that empiricism does not rule out logic. In science definition in terms of genus and difference still prevails. Definition is the universal requirement of rational disciplines and modes of inquiry, and as such is needed every bit as much in the study of poetry as in physics or metaphysics. To those who fear that analysis evaporates value it must be stated that the evaporation occasioned by analysis is only temporary, and that the value returns after analysis in greater abundance. A mechanism can be examined only by separating its parts during which process it cannot function purposively as a whole. But we can understand its function as a whole, and perhaps use it to better purpose, only by examining its separate parts. Malted milk does not taste any less good because the laboratory analysis of its constituents is printed on the label. It is true that a study of the forms of music aids the listener in his appreciation. He actually derives more pleasure from music when he understands it. We do not put an art in a straitjacket by having some knowledge of its structure. Purpose, however, while served by the mechanism of parts is external and a function of the whole. Analysis takes us on our way toward understanding the mechanism and prepares us for an appreciation of the purpose.

The prosodists have proceeded with something like analysis and appreciation. They have done something like analysis in that they have examined the parts with a view to discovering the function of the whole. In the business of definition the terms, genus and difference, call for an understanding

of the class of which the thing to be defined is a member, and of its difference from other members of that class, and this means that we shall have to know what poetry is and how it functions. The preparation certainly does involve us in an understanding of the genus of poetry as well as of its principal function. We may take the first step toward definition, then, if we proceed by the method of inspection and elimination of elements, in an effort to discover the essential ones. But before we can do even this we shall have to set down the elements of poetry as they are known. Thus we shall follow those who have studied poetry.

The prosodists have proceeded with something like appreciation in that they have attempted to break down poetry by means of the selection of the best examples of poetry. The analysis of poetry, they try to tell us, is good taste in poetry; it consists in such and such examples, which are good poems—and that is what poetry is. There are two factors in this approach which must be distinguished. One is the factor of particularity, and the other the subjective or psychological factor. We shall treat them in that order. Now, it is obvious that no class can be described or even analyzed in terms of whole members of that class. We may choose excellent poetry, such as Keats' *Ode to a Grecian Urn* or Paul Valéry's *Ebauche d'un Serpent*, and we may learn to appreciate it, a task which is not always easy; but if so we are still engaged at our task of the appreciation of particular examples of great poetry, and not learning what great poetry is, or even what poetry is, so that we may recognize the breed when next we meet it. Could anyone have argued from an appreciation of Baudelaire's *La Géante* to an appreciation of Shelley's *Ozymandias?* It is difficult to see how this could be done. There is no use, beyond the purposes of apprecia-

tion, in asserting that poetry consists in poems like these; of course it does, but the chief question we wish answered is, why does it? and there is no satisfactory answer in the mere statement that it does. In the realm of appreciation we deal with particulars for the universal values we find uniquely in them, but this will not do for definition. In the realm of definition we deal with universals, and with particulars only in so far as they exemplify universals in a universal manner and not with uniqueness or specificity at all. Thus the appreciation of the value of particular poems cannot be of assistance to the definition of poetry in general.

Poetry, of course, is something quite different from the enjoyment of poetry. To enjoy poetry two factors must be present: a listener or reader, and the poetry which is to be heard or read. But for poetry itself only one factor is necessary, and this is— poetry. In examining the nature of poetry, we can, therefore, immediately dismiss the appreciator and with him all psychological considerations. Poetry itself cannot consist in its effects upon an audience, though we may at once admit that without an audience of some sort there could be neither the apprehension, appreciation nor enjoyment of poetry. For some while it has been fashionable to attempt the explanation of an object in terms of the manner in which most persons customarily react to it, thus placing upon psychology the burden of having to explain nearly everything. This is as unfair to psychology as it is to other topics and makes it appear as a large science which is both confused and inadequate. The psychology of art is not art but psychology, indeed there could be no psychology of art were there no art independent of psychology, for then all would be psychology. The psychology of art is a valid field lying within the larger fields of art and of the applica-

tion of psychology. A psychology of art and even of poetry undoubtedly exists, but it is extraneous to the task we have set ourselves here, which remains that of discovering what poetry itself essentially is. We shall therefore have to set all psychological considerations apart when we seek to discover the nature of poetry.

A number of elements of poetry have been distinguished by various writers, many of these borrowed from other and more exact arts, especially from music. We hear about harmony, about modulation, melody, and so forth, but these are just what they appear: borrowed conceptions, more native to music than to poetry. To use the terms of one art in explanation of the elements of another is only to invite confusion and blurring. It is difficult enough to make artistic terms precise, and, since precision in this connection means the exclusion of what is not meant and the inclusion of what is, the carrying over of an artistic term from art to art is sure to defeat the very purpose for which the term is employed. There is no perspective, no light and shade, in music, no fugue on canvas, no poetry of motion. These may be illustrative figures of speech; they are certainly not useful analytical elements. Poetry in many respects is akin to music, but we do not learn about the essence of poetry by bringing to bear on it the conceptions of other arts.

Moreover, it is curious that poetry even has elements of its own which, peculiar though they may be to poetry, do not aid us in understanding its specific nature. Rhyme, for instance, is peculiar to poetry, there being no other art which employs this device; yet there is much poetry which is no less valid as poetry for not containing any rhymes. The poetry of the Psalms in the Old Testament, classic Greek poetry, and most of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, con-

tain no rhymes, yet they are poetry of a very high order. Thus like the musical terms, rhyme will not do as a defining element for poetry. What we are looking for in our search for defining characteristics are elements which occur nowhere except in poetry and which occur in all poetry. These requirements automatically eliminate from this inquiry all terms borrowed from other arts and all terms descriptive of poetic elements which are not universally true for poetry.

We are driven back, then, upon two of the traditional elements or characteristics which are said to hold for all poetry. These are: rhythm and meter. Rhythm is by no means restricted to poetry, but in the sense in which it occurs in poetry it may be defined as periodicity of sound. It is a temporal rather than a spatial affair, since it requires a certain duration in order to be exhibited as a pattern. More exactly, it means the alternate recurrence of arsis and thesis, of sound and counter-sound. Meter does not add very much to what we have already learned about rhythm. Meter is simply a name for the kinds of rhythm, given in terms of measured beats, of the number of feet to the line, and so forth. The metrical forms are simply particular kinds of rhythm to which we have assigned names by convention, such as the anapest, the dactyl, the trochee, the iamb. Now, it might be argued that no other arts have meter just like the meter of poetry, and this would be true; and it might further be argued that all poetry has meter of some sort, though this might be more difficult to defend. We have covered the function of meter in a general way by including rhythm, but we may propose in order to have a term of distinction that by meter we shall mean established rhythm, an arsis and thesis whose main outlines must be strong enough to be unmistakable.

The bóy stood ón the búrning déck
Whence áll but hím had fléd.

It would not be easy if it were even possible to read these lines in any other way. The meter stands out in strong fashion, so that the lines must be heard as they were intended to be, a plain illustration of meter, in its crudest form.

This does not mean, of course, that the meter must never be varied. One method by which meter is emphasized is that of variation. When a rhythm has been established in terms of some familiar meter, it is more apt to be noticed when absent than when present. The old English ballads, which are miracles of composition, illustrate this fact as clearly as any poetry.

There are twelve months in all the year,
As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year
Is the merry month of May.

That is from *Robin Hood and the Widow's Three Sons,* but the opening stanza of *The Battle of Otterburn* is even better for our purpose:

It fell about the Lammas tide
When husbands win their hay,
The doughty Douglas bound him to ride
In England to take a prey.

In both examples the iambic pattern is set in the first line (in *The Battle of Otterburn* it is the first two lines) and afterward considerably varied, thus both offering the effect of novelty and at the same time reminding us of the pattern

which is being varied. Variations from a norm are only possible in terms of the norm, without which they would not be variations. This is especially true of some familiar meter, such as the iambic pentameter of the sonnet. In Shakespeare's sonnets we find considerable variation from the normal iambic, but by that very fact attention is brought back to the iamb.

Hów like a Wínter hath my ábsence béen

or

Thóugh you do ánything, he thínks no íll

and

Whát in your súbstance, whéreof are you máde

and

Becaúse I would not dúll you with my sóng

and so on. The five sets of unaccented-accented beats have been employed as a pattern so often that, provided they are established in the first line of the sonnet and not departed from to the point to which another meter appears to have been adopted in its place, the variation from the norm is almost more normal than the norm itself.

But let us return from these analytical considerations to speculation upon the nature of poetry as a whole. We have in our remarks upon the difference between the meter of poetry and the meter of other arts unconsciously assumed that poetry is an art, but we have not explained what is meant here by art. Art is the imitation of what ought to be. Many will agree with this definition while others will disagree violently. However, even those who disagree about the nature of art frequently agree about some of the arts, and about what is an art and what is not. It is hardly to be doubted that

poetry is an art, and that there exist other arts besides poetry. Thus we know at least this much, that we must cast our definition of poetry in the form of a proposition which begins, 'Poetry is that art which,' and we shall have to show how it differs from other arts. But before we can go any further, it will be necessary to do just this, to show how poetry differs from the other arts; for we have given it rhythm, or periodicity of sound, and meter, or established rhythm, and we must ask whether any of the other arts employs rhythm and meter.

The spatial arts, such as sculpture and architecture, can be ruled out at once, since even if we were to admit that these arts have rhythm and meter we would have to insist that they are not the same rhythm and meter which we find in poetry, for the simple reason that the rhythm and meter of poetry are temporal rather than spatial; that is to say they are feet counted out in time rather than across space. The rhythms of sculpture, for example, are those of solid geometry, the repetition of curves or of masses in three-dimensional media giving the ground for a pattern which consists in similarities of pattern. This leaves the other temporal arts, of which music is by far the most prominent, to be compared with poetry; and here we find that music, too, has rhythm and meter. But we can distinguish the rhythm and meter of poetry from that of music by affirming that the former are those which are characteristic of language while the latter are not. Abstract music is a clear case of theme and variations repeating a pattern in 'pure' sound. However much we may read a literary meaning into, or out of, program music, the fact remains that its tonal pattern does not depend upon the rhythms of language or literature. Débussy's *The Afternoon of a Faun* may come close to the spirit of Mal-

larmé's poem, but it still does not lean upon the rhythms of the French language in which that poem is composed.

Confining poetry to language narrows it somewhat in that it immediately excludes those arts which do not employ the medium of language. But there are other arts which employ language besides poetry. There is imaginative prose, for instance, and there is drama. Drama may be cast either in prose or in poetry, so that it will not help to distinguish poetry from drama. But we certainly must endeavor to distinguish poetry from prose. Both poetry and prose are forms of literary art, and it is no easy task to draw hard and fast lines between them. So-called 'prose poetry' seems to be a hybrid affair lying just on the borderline. And there are some types of perfervid prose, the prose of the 'purple passages,' which are intermediate, also, and therefore extremely difficult to classify. There can be little doubt that we must admit to prose some degree of rhythm, a property which some kinds of prose exhibit more clearly than others. Consider the famous example of Walter Pater's description of the Mona Lisa in *The Renaissance*:

> The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all 'the ends of the world are come,' and the eyelids are a little weary. . . .

down to

> She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her. . . .

And so on. There are, it is true, rhythms in all prose; but we will find this passage more marked, more clearly established in its rhythms, than, for instance, the following, taken from *A Commentary on Hegel's Logic* by John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart:

> When we do reach to the conception of a thing with a plurality of attributes, we shall no longer have our present reason to believe in a substantial plurality. For that reason, as we have seen, is that plurality is necessary, and that no other plurality is possible, and this becomes invalid when a plurality of attributes in one thing has been established. If the conception of a substantial plurality is finally retained, it must rest on considerations not yet before us.

All languages have their own inherent rhythms, a topic which some day ought to be thoroughly investigated; moreover, the rhythms of a language appear unmistakably in its prose. Such rhythms appear in much more marked degree in its poetry. But the rhythms of true poetry are more marked than those of prose. Also, there is the additional fact that rhythms of poetry are more universal. It is one contention of this chapter that the prose rhythms of a language more than the rhythms of its poetry are peculiar to that language. The rhythms of poetry are to a very great extent universal, and we have learned to describe certain lines of poetry as iambic pentameter or dactylic hexameter irrespective of whether the line is in Greek, Latin, Dutch or English. Thus poetry, like prose, has rhythm, but, unlike prose, it also has meter. Prose with established rhythm is simply a misnomer, for no matter how it may be printed it is not prose but poetry.

We have described poetry as an art; we have distinguished it from all other arts except literary prose by its use of the

rhythms of language; and, finally, we have distinguished it from literary prose by its use of established rhythm, or meter. We are thus in a position to offer a tentative definition of poetry, a definition with absolute claims, for it is tentative not in the sense that there can be more than one good definition of poetry but rather in the sense that it is possible that the one submitted here is not the correct one. More than other objects, perhaps, poetry has thus far defied definition, but this emphatically is not to say that there can be no definition of poetry. The difficulty is one of discovery, not of poetry.

Let us assert, then, that poetry is that art which employs the meter of language.

Of course, this definition depends upon the understanding of the definition of meter as *established* rhythm and upon the definition of rhythm as periodicity of sound. It also depends upon the definitions of art and of language. Given these definitions and explanations as they have been set forth here, the definition of poetry as that art which employs the meter of language seems to hold.[42]

Some critics will object to the breadth of this definition. It does not distinguish between poetry, verse, and other mild forms of the art, such as *vers de société* and even jingles. This will appear justified when we remember that art is the imitation of things as they ought to be, a definition which does not rule out bad art except in the sense of its value. Poor or weak imitation of things as they ought to be is poor

[42] It is possible that this definition has been anticipated somewhat by various scholars, *e.g.*, by Coleridge (*Bio. Lit.*, ch. XIV) and by Saintsbury (*History of English Prose Rhythm*, Macmillan, 1912, p. 450). Coleridge mentions the theory though it is not the one he fully adopts. Saintsbury is concerned with distinguishing between poetry and prose. The definition as given here does not derive from them, however, but from a study of poetry and from a philosophy which they do not maintain. It depends, of course, upon the validity of the philosophy and upon consistency with the facts of poetry.

or weak art, but it is art nevertheless. Those who would define poetry in such a way as to make it equivalent with its best examples offer too narrow a definition. Verse may be weaker than poetry and jingles weaker than verse, but verse and jingles are examples of the art of poetry just as much as is great poetry; they simply are not as great. Great poetry is the perfection of the art, the perfection of the use of the meter of language.

Other critics will object to the definition we have given on the grounds of its excessive narrowness. They will say that it does not allow the term, poetry, to be applied to anything except that which employs both meter and language. This charge is quite correct, for properly speaking the term, poetry, does not apply literally to anything except poetry. Poetry is not a vague quality hovering about the world in such a way that the discriminating and the lovers of the beautiful are able to detect it in a woman's face, in the dance, or in a sunset. There is no poetry, except in a metaphorical sense, in the flight of a deer, in the form of a young human female, in the wind on a lonely beach at night, or in the stars seen from a high mountain top. Poetry must not be confused with either beauty or desirability. It contains elements of both, but this is not to equate them. All poetry describes the beautiful and the desirable, but not all that is beautiful and desirable is poetry. The definition of poetry presented here does not preclude the metaphorical use of the term. Metaphor always transcends definition, a freedom which does not nullify the validity either of metaphor or of definition. Thus the narrowness as well as the broadness of the definition is a product of the effort to make it exact, without which it would be worthless. We want to know when we

are within a field and when we are outside it, and an efficient definition accomplishes both purposes.

There will be still other critics who will object to the definition offered here, on the grounds that it seems to exclude what we have come to know as free verse. Not all examples of so-called free verse can be justifiably classified together. Some free verse is not verse at all but prose arbitrarily cut up into lines of verse length and printed as verse. Other instances of free verse consist in poems having lines of irregular length and lacking rhymes. The former are not poetry. The test of whether the latter instances are those of poetry consists simply in a reliance on the criterion afforded by the definition, namely that of *established* rhythm. Such rhythm may be strained to the utmost by a bewildering variety of variations; but if it is there, the result is poetry none the less. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by typographical similarities or differences. Poetry, no matter what its name, is poetry if it employs established rhythm; and this holds for free verse as well as for any other supposedly intermediate type.

The definition, it should be noted, is not as simple as it appears. For we must remember that art is the imitation of things as they ought to be, and meter is the established rhythm of language, and that poetry is the art which imitates through established rhythm the things of language as they ought to be. What are the 'things of language'? Language is the social instrument of communication, and literally all knowledge is or may be communicated. Thus the things of language are meanings, and, since languages grow continually, there is no end to meanings. It is these endless meanings which are the things which poetry through the use of meter or established rhythm is expected to perfect

by translating them into the form in which they can appear as they ought to be.

It is interesting to speculate on what would have happened to poetry had languages been developed logically and systematically rather than historically. The languages of mankind are combinations of disorder and system, of chance and regularity. The irregularities of the most widely employed languages of the world are notorious, but we are familiar with their systematic properties as well. Thus they offer opportunities with restriction, evidently a prime situation for poetry. A language containing the marked regularities of Greek has produced poetry of a very high order, but so has a language with marked irregularities, like English. It is interesting that the modern European languages, which manifest few regularities in comparison with the classic languages, have been responsible for the rise of rhyme. On the other hand, the use of onomatopoetic treatment has declined since the Greeks. From an artificial language, like Esperanto, it is doubtful if good poetry could ever come. Everything is too neat, too provided for; there is denotation but no connotation. No stimulus to the restriction of order, such as we find in a great sprawling language like English, exists in the synthetic product. Poetry is a product of chance as well as of wonder. It tries to satisfy inquiry by establishing order. This can only be done in a partially disordered situation. Bacon once remarked that there could be no great art that did not have some strangeness in the proportions. Monotony is not order, as any good prosodist can confirm. Poetry which does not vary its rhythm after establishing the meter is pretty dull stuff, but poetry without established rhythm is a failure.

Poetry seizes upon and universalizes the rhythms of lan-

guage, and the extent to which it can make them universal is the extent to which it can actualize the values it is called upon to actualize. Language can be about literally anything, and so can poetry. Only, its description must be of the values of a perfect world. Since it is concerned with ordering values and not with logic directly (whence issues its artistic nature), its method is indirect rather than direct. But that it is an art, few will attempt to deny. And in admitting that it is an art they have also admitted that it is an ontological value in the world. Thus poetry is something good which happens to the language of a people. What was an instrument becomes enriched with axiologic order. And by means of the order, a great new art is discovered, one which goes beyond the original purposes of language though still remaining communicative. For art is expressive of the highest value, and poetry, the art of language, is expressive of the highest knowledge and of the highest order.

We may now briefly recapitulate our findings. The definition of poetry is difficult but a necessity nevertheless. The study of poetry has been confined to analysis and literary appreciation. But poetry in essence is equivalent neither to its analytical elements or parts nor to its best examples. Poetry differs from its appreciators; thus we may rule out all psychological considerations. Traditionally, there are a number of elements of poetry, but many of them it shares with other arts, especially music. Omitting these, we find three elements peculiar to poetry: rhythm, meter and rhyme. Rhyme is not essential to poetry. Rhythm is periodicity of sound, the alternate recurrence of arsis and thesis. Meter is established rhythm of a particular kind. Poetry is an art but there are other arts besides poetry. Poetry differs from the spatial arts in being temporal; it differs from the other

temporal arts in employing language. It differs from the other literary art, the art of prose, by its use of meter: prose has rhythm but it does not have meter. Poetry is that art which employs the meter of language. The definition is far from simple for it depends upon other definitions: those of art and language. If art is the imitation of things as they ought to be, and language is the communication of meaning, then poetry seeks with its meter to express perfection of meaning through language, and the meanings expressed may be the values of anything—any values. This expression is made possible to poetry only by the fact that languages, having been organic growths, contain both irregularities and systematic properties. With artificial languages it is likely that there would have been no poetry. But through language poetry has demonstrated its ontological status. It has enriched language with axiologic order and at the same time discovered a new art which fulfills and yet goes beyond the original purpose of language.

Chapter XI

THE THEORY OF *HAMLET*

THE beauty of the world and the excitement of life for the adventurous empiricist in the field of theory is heightened by the fact that nothing has been done finally: even the stalest of problems offers a fresh and a glorious opportunity. Where little has been attempted, much remains to be done; where much has been attempted and something accomplished, much remains to be done better. But it would be difficult, outside the field of science, to find any problem which has been settled perfectly and irrevocably, for once and all; and even within science those who are able to count upon a kind of ultimate inquisitiveness refuse to accept absolutely any solution to a given problem, even though the degree of the probability of their acceptance begins closely to approach absolute acceptance as a limit. In the case of literary interpretation in general and of Shakespearean interpretation in particular, the amount of controversy has been gigantic; and in the case of Shakespeare in general and of *Hamlet* in particular, it is perhaps still larger. In *Hamlet* the nature of the subject-matter, the corruption of the text, and the implicit philosophy of the scholars and

commentators—for the most part that philosophy which has ruled out all philosophical interpretation as illicit—has meant that the problems confronting interpretation have, as it were, conveyed their own peculiar kind of bafflement, a bafflement which differs in kind from those presented by other literary difficulties of works by the same author or in the same period.

There is, for instance, the problem of discovering and defining Shakespeare's philosophy, and there are the subordinate problems of discovering and defining the philosophy set forth in each of the various plays. The many-sidedness of Shakespeare's outlook has been selected hitherto as its chief feature. The repeated attempts to read Shakespeare as the advocate of this or that philosophy have gone down to ignominious defeat before the quotation of that or this contradictory passage. So Shakespeare has been described as a man who held no philosophy—or as one who held all philosophies. But, of course, neither of these alternatives makes the slightest sense. The unity of the plays within themselves and as a solid body of work is inconsistent with the view that Shakespeare had no philosophy. To have no consistent outlook would mean to have discovered chaos in literature, and this assuredly no one accuses Shakespeare of doing. On the other hand, to assume that Shakespeare held all philosophies means the same thing; for a chaos of nothing is the same as one of all things, unless we assume that all the philosophies are arranged in a system such that one prevails over the others.

Why is it, we may ask at this point, that work which embraces a number of conflicting meanings appears to convey a greater sense of the fullness and abundance of life than does work which presents only one meaning? "*Do I*

contradict myself?" asks Walt Whitman. "Very well, then, I contradict myself. I am large, I contain everything." The author whose work embraces conflicting viewpoints is a source of great self-justification to the narrow partisan, who is able to find his own viewpoint reflected by a master and to ignore the others. The author, declares our partisan, saw the light of the truth upon one occasion, at least, and we may all rejoice in that. The rest is interpreted as being the same truth in exotic dress, or else is dismissed on chronological grounds as early improvisations or senile concoctions—but dismissed, in any case. Thus we have the spectacle, not without its uses, of warring criticisms occasioned by literary interpretation, and the spectacle of single-minded assertions and denials in the enterprising game of cross-purposes.

Those who find, however, that Shakespeare's work embraces a number of contradictory meanings are apt to be the same scholars who emphasize the contradictoriness of the meanings in favor of the truth of one or another of them, while neglecting to observe the importance of the notion that the contradictory meanings are also *embraced.* The conflicting meanings are caught up in the embrace—of what? Presumably, in the embrace of some more inclusive meaning. But just what is that inclusive meaning? The answer must wait for a thoroughgoing study of the philosophy of Shakespeare. Those who have proferred answers to this question have agreed upon the term, humanism, without understanding that this does not decide the question so long as humanism itself is open to many interpretations. Our special problem in this chapter is the philosophical theory of *Hamlet,* and we shall see the term, humanism, occurring here also. But the larger question must for the moment be exhibited in a lesser, albeit a still complex, one: what is the meaning not of Shake-

speare as a whole but of that part of Shakespeare which is exhibited in the play, *Hamlet?*

Here the interpreter meets at its fullest a further difficulty which confronts all interpreters of Shakespeare. Analysis is a task which for most ordinary purposes is easily distinguished from the altogether different task of appreciation. The temperamental differences between critics and appreciators make the distinction between these undertakings a light accomplishment. Yet Shakespeare at his best—and he is certainly at his best in *Hamlet* even if not only in *Hamlet*—has a fascination which adds to rather than detracts from the difficulties of the mechanism of analysis. While we are reading a particular passage in *Hamlet*, or in any other of the great plays, we find ourselves persuaded, so charming is the language. How can we quarrel with one who writes so well, with such a curious combination of the utmost both in economy and profusion? Those who are conquered by the effect of the whole have little inclination toward the dissection of the parts. Yet that is just what the understanding of the play requires. And to return to the play as an appreciator after the appreciation has for the time being been surmounted in order to make an adequate analysis possible, is to experience an effect which is almost overpowering. To understand Shakespeare, and to feel him, too, is almost to prompt the cry of 'Enough—too much.'

It is well, then, to remember that the embracing of meanings which conflict seems to the limited critic to be accomplished only at a price, which price seems to him to be the unity of the whole. Most advocates of partisan and narrow positions are advocates of half-truths, who assume that their half-truths are the whole of truth. Thus they are not wrong, except in the claims they make for the field of applications

of their partial truths. We can find no solution by easy sublation, either; for to submerge the half-truths altogether in the higher unity of the meaning of the whole is to lose them at the lower level where as half-truths they are indeed true. What Shakespeare could do, and what gives him his peculiarly universal appeal, was to sublate half-truths by a greater truth while maintaining them at the lower level as half-truths. In order to illustrate the misinterpretation by critics of these half-truths, let us sample some of the most typical of Shakespearean interpretation, before proceeding to an exposition of the theory which prompted the composition of this chapter.

II

A great bulk of Shakespearean criticism falls into the nineteenth century, when psychological interpretations prevailed. To the critic of Shakespeare born into the nineteenth century, with but few exceptions, the tragedy of *Hamlet* was a tragedy of the things of the mind, and all the events of the play were held to be subservient to the development, or disintegration, of Hamlet's mind and, as a consequence, also of his character. The struggle takes place between one resolution and another, between intellect and will or between will and action; whatever conflict be chosen for the analysis of the Prince's character, it is always cast in psychological terms; and this psychological conflict in Hamlet himself is always understood to be the chief motive of the play. The most important critics of the nineteenth century were English and German. Apart from the languages in which they wrote, there are no fundamental differences between them, and, on the contrary, they had in common the subjective or psychological interpretation of the meaning of the play.

Among the English critics, we may single out as typical of the best the remarks made by Coleridge and Hazlitt. For Coleridge, "the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakespeare's deep and accurate science [*sic*] in mental philosophy. . . . In Hamlet he seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses and our meditation on the workings of our minds,—an equilibrium between the real and the imaginary worlds. In *Hamlet* this balance is disturbed; his thoughts and the images of his fancy are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his very perceptions, instantly passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and a color not naturally their own. Here we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities." Hamlet's mind, "unseated from its healthy relation, is constantly occupied with the world within, and abstracted from the world without," a character giving utterance to soliloquies which "spring from that craving after the indefinite." [43] In short, as Coleridge explains in a later book, Shakespeare in *Hamlet* "intended to portray a person in whose view the external world and all its incidents and objects were comparatively dim and of no interest in themselves, and which began to interest only when they were reflected in the mirror of his mind." [44]

There is no need to expatiate upon the subjective, psychological and mentalistic preoccupation which is so evident in Coleridge's analysis. There are many philosophical as-

[43] S. T. Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare* (New York, 1868), vol. iv, p. 144.

[44] S. T. Coleridge, *Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton* (London, 1856), p. 141.

sumptions here which presumably Coleridge, like most of his generation, took so fully for granted that he was not aware of them. One instance will suffice to show this. The "real" and "imaginary" worlds of Coleridge, as he explains in context, are the mental and the physical, the world of concepts and images, on the one hand, and the world of actual things, on the other. But these are epistemological terms, so that the contrast, in its importance, amounts to a reduction of the ontological to the epistemological. There are three worlds, not two, to all except the crudest of nominalistic empiricists. There is the world of the subject, which is mental, and there is the world of the object, which is physical; but these are both epistemological worlds. There is also the ontological world which is independent of both subject and object, the world of universals and values. The critics of nineteenth-century Europe shared with its philosophers an implicit belief in the sole reality of the two epistemological worlds, a belief which went so deep that it was never even called into question. Then, again, the play, *Hamlet,* we must remember, is a "tragicall hiftorie," and history can occur, even in the case of a single character, only somehow objectively out in the world. Since there is an interaction between Hamlet and his world in that each has an effect upon the other, the history cannot be entirely a matter of what went on in Hamlet's mind. We cannot, in other words, justify the reduction of the scope of the play from the historical order, as exemplified in the events which took place at the court of the King of Denmark, to the psychological order, as exemplified in the events which took place in the mind of one person, albeit a central one, at the court of the King of Denmark.

It would be useless indeed to seek relief from this intense

psychologizing by taking refuge in the interpretation of Hazlitt. For Hazlitt merely shifts the meaning of the play from Hamlet's mind to our own. The speeches and sayings of Hamlet are "as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is *we* who are Hamlet." [45] Whoever has suffered the melancholy mood, the withdrawal, in brief, the problems, of Hamlet, is himself Hamlet. Of course, this is only another way of saying that the greatness of the play rests upon the sympathetic reactions which it arouses in the spectators, and that the universality of the problem of *Hamlet* accounts for its appeal. If it says anything more, it is that the meaning of the play is exhausted by the appreciators' understanding of the mental problem of the central character. Such an interpretation obviously confuses the appreciation of *Hamlet* with the meaning of Hamlet. Otherwise, we are left with the spectacle of a play whose meaning is exhausted by the struggles between various ideas and impulses which take place in the protagonist's mind, and which are accorded no reference and in fact no meaning outside that mind.

There is undoubtedly a great similarity between the English and the German commentators of that period. Apart from occasional insights, which to some extent always seem to contradict the central theses advanced, the main theme of *Hamlet* is Hamlet, for the Germans as well as for the English; and, further, in the man, Hamlet, the psychological states are solely and exclusively important. It would be foolish to argue that Hamlet's mind can be left out of the play, for this is far from the truth; but it is quite another thing to argue that everything can be left out of the play except Hamlet's mind. Hamlet's mind is occupied with real

[45] W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (London, 1817), p. 104.

problems, that is to say, with problems having an objective reference. What is the problem which occupies Hamlet's mind, and what is its objective frame of reference? Before we can attempt answers to these questions, it will be well to glance at some of the German interpretations, since in the nineteenth century the Germans devoted so much thought and energy to Shakespeare.

A very great deal of thought and energy was expended, that is true; yet it is doubtful whether it added up to much. German thought in the nineteenth century was too deeply under the influence of the nominalistic Kantian philosophy to produce anything in the way of literary criticism that could avoid the spell of subjectivism which Kant had cast over all his fellows. Goethe has chided his countrymen for failing to understand that the external relations of the play, that is those things which do not depend upon the central character but upon accidents, are as important as the internal relations, that is, those things which depend solely upon the central character.[46] By distinguishing between internal and external relations, and further by insisting upon the external relations, Goethe went a long way toward counteracting the intense subjectivism of the German criticism, but to no avail. Goethe himself saw the whole play as the depicting of "a great deed laid upon a soul unequal to the performance of it," [47] and those who came after him tended to revert to the subjectivistic view.

For Herder, *Hamlet* was a tragedy "which is to lead us into the very soul of Hamlet." [48] For Schlegel, *Hamlet* was "a tragedy of thought inspired by continual and never-

[46] J. W. Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*, trans. Carlyle (Boston, 1851), vol. i, p. 353.
[47] Goethe, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
[48] J. G. Herder, *Literatur und Kunst*, 12.

satisfied meditation on human destiny." [49] For Gans, it was "tragedy of the Nothingness of Reflection, or . . . it is the tragedy of the Intellect." [50] The names as well as the comments could be repeated many times over, but the intense subjective interpretation remains the same. The German critics seem unable to get away from the mentality of Hamlet, the central character of the play, a psychological part of the play which they tend to confuse with the whole. Despite the corrective influence of occasional insights into the detached and objective meaning of *Hamlet* (insights which would seem to indicate that with the proper metaphysical orientation much might have come from the same writers of inestimably greater value than what actually did come), the burden of the Germans was that the meaning of the play is entirely directed toward and wholly exhausted by events in the mind of its central character. This would not have been an explanation or an accounting which could have satisfied the contemporaries of Shakespeare, any more than it could have satisfied, say, the classic Greeks; and it no longer satisfies us. We are willing to accord Hamlet's mental problems their due importance in the scheme of the whole, but that importance is not equal to the whole scheme, as older critics have supposed.

The German psychological interpretation of *Hamlet* was revived for a last flicker of life in the second decade of the twentieth century, though this time in a new guise under the auspices of the Freudian psychoanalysts. According to this interpretation, Hamlet is a man who has repressed the cause of his own hesitancy. He maintains a strong sexual

[49] A. W. Schlegel, *Lectures on Art and Dramatic Literature*, trans. Black (London, 1815), vol. ii, p. 192.
[50] E. Gans, *Vermischte Schriften* (Berlin, 1834), vol. ii, p. 270.

attitude toward his mother, in terms of which much can be explained. The hesitancy, as well as the sex feeling, is due to the attitude toward his father as a rival for the affections of his mother. Ophelia is the sufferer from his reaction against all women, which occurs as a result of his filial experiences. In all probability, Shakespeare himself attempted to get rid of the same difficulty, one which he would have had if he had not written the play.[51] It is, of course, despite the difference in emphasis, which removes essential reality from the mind where it had been supposed to dwell by the thoughtful Germans and English of the nineteenth century, and places it in the gonads, on the assumption that the only genuine psychology is abnormal psychology, and that therefore abnormal psychology is completely explanatory of psychology in the normal range,—it is, we may say, an incorrigibly psychological theory, since it, too, assumes that the problem of the play, *Hamlet*, is something entirely indwelling in the body and mind of the character, Hamlet. We are still concerned with a play which is supposed to center about the psychological motives of its chief character, though these motives are no longer conscious but subconscious, and motives prompted no longer by the spirit but now by the flesh. We have gained by this change a novel turn of criticism, but in thus attempting to get at the meaning of the play we have failed utterly to divest ourselves of the subject.

The psychological theory which we shall have to consider next is that of the late English critic, Bradley. According to Bradley, the key to *Hamlet*, the play, lies in the

[51] E. Jones, "The Oedipus-Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery: A Study in Motive." *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. XXI (1910), pp. 72-113. Also E. Sharpe, "The Impatience of Hamlet." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vol. X (London, 1929), pp. 270-9.

psychological character of its leading figure. The character of Hamlet will explain whatever meaning the play possesses. Hamlet, says Bradley, is an intellectual, and as such he is naturally grieved at his father's death, horrified by his mother's over-hasty and incestuous marriage, and also naturally unbalanced by the appearance of the ghost. The events which do happen in the play are those which would happen, given the effect upon the character of a sensitive intellectual prince of the more or less devastating events which already have happened.[52] Bradley assumes, of course, that the problem of Hamlet is the problem of his character, and that his character explains the play. Naturally, it can be admitted that the play has a character meaning all its own, and furthermore that the character meaning is just what Bradley says that it is, without thereby precluding the possibility that the play as a whole, including such a character and such events, may have a further meaning which has nothing specifically to do either with this character or with those events, but may be much broader than either or than both taken together. The shortcoming of Bradley's interpretation is that it does not interpret very much. It does not venture and hence it does not gain. We may admit what Bradley has to say—all, that is, but its limitations—and still wish to prepare ourselves for a search into the meaning of the play as a whole. Subjective or psychological explanations are apt to be narrow, and the one at present under consideration is no exception to this generalization.

It has occurred to some timid souls that it would be a daring thing to dislike *Hamlet* and boldly to say so. *Hamlet* is admittedly strong medicine. To be repelled by the play is not an unusual experience; but to state the dislike and

[52] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (London, 1904), pp. 89-174.

to assume that such a statement constitutes a profound criticism, is to have the courage merely of cowardice. The best-known of the criticisms of this kind are concerned with psychological questions bordering on that of character. Eliot, for instance, asserts that the play is unsatisfactory because the emotions of Hamlet are in excess of the dramatic situations which are presumed to have evoked them.[53] Eliot has a pontifical habit of preparing us for a tremendous conceptual mountain, only to bring forth a casual, observational mouse.[54] His criticism is not a basic one, even if it were true; and, in addition, he is far from having proved it. Hamlet's emotional sprees admittedly are tremendous, but so are the events which call them forth. As Shakespeare himself points out, the events which transpire at court have gigantic repercussions.[55]

Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

Prince Hamlet's emotions are supercharged, but the events which happen to kings and queens, princes and prime ministers, are always great events. Tragedies which influence the lives of so many people are not trivial tragedies, and there is no reason why their effect should be thought of as limited to the production of trivial emotions. Hamlet's reactions are only natural in view of what is involved.

Much the same comment could be made upon Stoll's suggestion that the characters in Shakespeare's plays mark a refinement over the hand-me-down plots. Character is always

[53] T. S. Eliot, "Hamlet and His Problems" in *The Sacred Wood* (New York, 1921), pp. 87-94.
[54] An observation made by Professor Leonard F. Dean, in conversation.
[55] *Hamlet*, III, iii, 22-3. See also *loc. cit.*, 11-22.

that which would work itself out in practice, were it not for the fortuitous elements in events. In this connection may be mentioned again the caution of Goethe who said that in the interpretation of *Hamlet* the external relations of the play must not be sacrificed to the internal relations of its protagonist. Werner even goes so far as to suggest that the hero of the drama should be studied from the viewpoint of the tragedy as a whole, and not the reverse.[56] Many of the psychological and subjective theories of the interpretation of *Hamlet* are ingenious and all are interesting, but in the end they lead to a bankruptcy which suggests that the answer does not lie here and that we should somehow look beyond the subject.

III

There are such things as non-subjective theories of the meaning of *Hamlet*; and we shall, in fact, examine some of them.

The first is, surprisingly enough, to be found as an exception among those same nineteenth-century Germans against whom we have so vigorously inveighed for their intense subjectivism. The exception is Karl Werder. Werder launched a keen attack upon those subjectivistic critics who had blamed Hamlet's inward deficiencies for creating an obstacle to his own actions in the play, and who had further assumed that the stumbling block of such deficiencies, together with the confusion consequent upon it, constitutes the theme of the play. Werder insisted that the objective nature of Hamlet's problem itself precluded the performance of his revenge on Claudius for the murder of King Hamlet.

[56] H. A. Werner, *Ueber das Dunkel in der Hamlet-Tragodie.* (Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, 1870.) Vol. V, p. 40.

What was required of Hamlet "simply was not *possible*, and this for reasons entirely *objective*. The situation of things, the force of circumstances, the nature of his task, directly forbid it, and so imperatively, that he was compelled to respect the prohibition, if he were to keep his reason; above all, his poetic and dramatic, aye, and his human, reason. The critics have been so absorbed in the study of his character, that the *task* imposed upon him has been lost sight of. Here is the fundamental mistake." [57]

Werder goes on to argue that against the social and political background of Hamlet's day, or perhaps even of Shakespeare's, the murder of Claudius by Hamlet followed by Hamlet's seizing of the throne, would have been condoned neither by the courtiers nor by the masses of the people, unless indeed there had been some way in which Hamlet could have proved that his motive had been revenge, and his actions called for by the previous murder of his father by Claudius, a proof which would not be sufficiently supported by Hamlet's contention that he had learned of the earlier deed from the ghost of his own father. Therefore the action of the play, including Hamlet's own hesitation, is a purely objective result of circumstances and conditions prevailing in the social world at the time that the mandate was forced upon him.

Can we rest content with this theory? No, we cannot; not, that is, unless it turns out to be sufficiently comprehensive. And it fails on this score, since it does not adequately explain Hamlet's psychology. The solution to the shortcomings of theories which are excessively subjective assuredly cannot consist in a theory which overlooks the

[57] K. Werder, *Vorlesungen uber Shakespeare's Hamlet* (Berlin, 1875), p. 32.

subjective realm altogether. Hamlet's thoughts as revealed by his speeches and actions, and particularly by his soliloquies, cannot be successfuly overlooked, as they are in Werder's theory. There is also another and a more serious sin of omission; but since the omission appears obvious in the context of a later objective theory, we may proceed to examine this later theory, and to allow the criticism of it to reveal the second shortcoming which both objective theories have.

The later objective theory is that which is offered for our consideration by the contemporary Marxists. The Russian critic, Smirnov, sets forth a Marxist interpretation, based on the assumption of the economic determinism of history. Hamlet, according to this interpretation, is a character not of an earlier Denmark, but of Shakespeare's own day in Elizabethan England. He is a character enveloping within the fictive frame of his problems the socio-economic dilemma with which Shakespeare correctly felt his own person to be confronted. Shakespeare lived at a time when the corruptions of a declining feudalism were beginning to manifest themselves. He was disgusted with them, naturally enough. But, as a true humanist, he was equally disgusted with the socio-economic force which he saw was rapidly rising to the fore; and he viewed with dismay the increase in naked self-interest revealed by the efforts at primary accumulation of the rising bourgeoisie, Hamlet had no faith in the masses because of their political immaturity. He was repelled by the practical philistinism of the bourgeoisie. Shakespeare could find no solution to this choice of evils; he expressed himself in the character of Hamlet, who took refuge from the impossible choice in madness. Hamlet is a man of action delayed by the necessity of choosing be-

tween equally distasteful alternatives; a humanist who is able to discover in his own situation no humanistic alternative.[58]

The Marxist interpretation makes up for one of the deficiencies of the Werder interpretation, for the former does attempt to embrace and explain the subjective field of Hamlet's mind in terms of the socio-economic events which cause it to be what it is. The Marxist theory of *Hamlet*, however, falls into the group of familiar fallacies which we have come inevitably to expect from the Marxist interpretation of anything; Smirnov confuses occasion with cause, and he reads the accidents of history deterministically. On the first score, there is little doubt that Marxist theory has done scholarship a great turn by pointing out that while the economic level of social events is not the highest yet it is the most reliable, in the sense that it is the level on which all other social events rest. The economics level, in other words, furnishes the occasion to other levels, but not the cause since the distinction between occasion and cause is a perfectly valid one. An event may have one or more occasions, but it can have only one cause; occasion is historical, while cause is logical. The socio-economic events which have occasioned Hamlet's lapse into madness may be, as Smirnov says, the occasions of that madness; but the assumption of Smirnov's theory, to be good orthodox Marxism, has to make the further claim that the socio-economic events are also the cause of the madness; and this is something else again. Cause is always at a certain level; things can only be caused by something existing at their own level, they may be occasioned by things existing at practically any

[58] A. A. Smirnov, *Shakespeare: A Marxist Interpretation* (New York, 1936), p. 61 ff.

other level. Socio-economic events assuredly do not exist at the psychological level, nor does the psychological level have anything more in common with the socio-economic than occasions.

On the second score, we find another fallacy which is not extremely different from the first, and indeed flows naturally from it. This fallacy has to do with that part of Marxist theory which is described as historical determinism; it is, in brief, the theory which asserts that the way things have happened is the way they have to happen. This theory is blasted altogether by the sheer novelty of events; for it is true that events resemble each other in many ways, yet no two events are exactly alike. History is a mixture of chance and cause; yet we are no more justified in confusing chance and cause than we are in confusing occasion and cause. Chance is not the same as cause and never will be; indeed, respectable theories of history try to separate out the pattern of history from actual history, *i.e.*, its underlying cause which is independent of chance. Smirov's Hamlet, then, is a prince who emerges from the maze of history only to discover that social events have offered him two stimuli in the shape of economic alternatives which he finds equally distasteful. It could never have happened otherwise. Faced with two disagreeable opposites of feudalism and primary accumulation, Hamlet becomes a neurotic or psychotic; he retires to the insanity which inhibits purposive action. But in stating this simple answer to a difficult problem, Smirnov, like the earlier objectivist in *Hamlet* interpretation, Werder, has exchanged one knowledge end-term for another. He has rejected the subjective interpretation of Hamlet for an objective interpretation. But in so doing he has not got rid of the principal dilemma; for both objectivists and sub-

jectivists view the problem of *Hamlet* as though the answer must necessarily be found in the relation between the mind of Hamlet and the world about him. Is it his mind which works on the events at least so far as he is concerned (subjective version); or is it the social events at court which work on his mind (objective version)?

Before we can answer this question, it may be wise to examine some of the other objective theories of interpretation which have been employed in the attempt to discover the true meaning of Hamlet. Two of these may be described, roughly, as the dramatic interpretation and the symbolic interpretation.

The dramatic interpretation of *Hamlet* rests on the assumption that the play can be totally explained as a dramatic problem; that, in other words, the meaning of *Hamlet* is to be found in the stage of presentation, and found only there. Robertson, for instance, holds that the proper explanation of *Hamlet* is to be made in terms of Shakespeare's attempt to use, and improve on, older material. All of the difficulties and special features of the play are caused by the effort of Shakespeare to create out of the somewhat intractable material of the sources in Kyd and Belleforest an aesthetic masterpiece.[59] Stoll similarly wishes to explain Hamlet's delay in carrying out his revenge solely as a stage and dramatic device.[60] And, again, Wilson in much the same vein considers that the meaning of the play is that one which it held for Shakespeare's contemporaries, more particularly for his audiences. The delay is a necessary technical device, nothing more, for the making of a play. Hamlet is a *stage* character,

[59] J. M. Robertson, *The Problem of "Hamlet"* (London, 1919).

[60] E. E. Stoll, *Hamlet: An historical and comparative study*. "Research Publications of the University of Minnesota," vol. VIII, no. 5 (Minneapolis, 1919).

that explains everything; and we only come to grief in trying to pretend that there is more meaning in Hamlet than we should expect to find in a stage character.[61]

The difficulties of such a view appear to be obvious. These critics also are taking the occasion of the play for its cause. Of course, Hamlet *is* a stage character; obviously, he is not a real person if by real person we mean one of flesh and blood. But does that limit his meaning rather than increase it? Many real flesh-and-blood persons have no particularly significant meaning, while many fictional characters have nothing else. To assume that the problem of artistic invention which presented itself to Shakespeare when he was busy adapting Kyd and Belleforest to his own purposes, or that the practical problem of putting the play on the stage successfully, constitute and indeed exhaust whatever meaning the play may have, is to confuse the occasion with the cause. Shakespeare is dead, but *Hamlet* is not; and whatever Shakespeare may have meant by the play is probably an answer we shall never know with any certainty, while what *Hamlet* means *Hamlet* itself is still here to tell us. A work of art has a life of its own. Such a meaning may or may not correspond to that which the artist intended to give it. There are artists who have builded better than they knew, and others who have builded worse than they intended. Shakespeare's control over language would lead us to believe that he wrote exactly what he meant. But in any case—and this is the important point—we have no way of finding out what he meant except from the play itself, and there it may or may not correspond with what the play means. But, since we lack the means of distinguishing, we may still endeavor to discover what the play means and let it

[61] J. D. Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* (New York, 1935).

go at that. In other words, we should not confuse what Shakespeare meant with what *Hamlet* means. Similarly, the problem of the play as a stage production in the early seventeenth century throws no final light on the meaning of the play now. The play itself has not changed, and we may presume that therefore its meaning has not changed, either. Both these dramatic arguments are essentially historical arguments and as such unsound.

The last type of artistic theory which we shall consider is the symbolic interpretation. Unfortunately, these have been few in number. We may, however, consider one of the better known. Knight states that Hamlet is a symbol—*the* symbol, in fact, the symbol of Death. Hamlet is an impersonation of Death. Truth is evil. The climax of the play occurs in the first act, when the ghost appears. The rest of the play, contrary to the usual procedure, is a reverberation of this original explosion, and ends only with what Knight calls an "act of creative assassination." [62] There is nothing essentially wrong with this particular symbolic approach. The symbolism chosen, that of death, is a difficult one to fit into the entire play. The arguments which have been advanced in the past by the subjectivists are pertinent here. Hamlet represents the life of the intellect, an abundance of mental energy so great that it interferes with and inhibits physical action. But this is not death, it is life, albeit a life that is mental. Shakespeare was too profound a playwright to employ a symbolism so crude. Death is after all a figure allegorical in the most obvious sense of the term, whereas Shakespeare's characters were nothing if not human. If they had other meanings, and there were few of them which did not, those other meanings can never be explained so simply:

[62] G. W. Knight, *The Wheel of Fire* (London, 1930), pp. 34-50.

Shakespeare is not to be explained in terms that would be sufficient for John Bunyan.

IV

The objective school, albeit its variety is greater than anything which the subjectivists have to offer, is never altogether satisfactory in any one of its branches. The subjectivists are partial, and so are the objectivists. Each tends to assume that the other is its only recognized adversary in the field of theory. Neither school has recognized that the alternatives are not exhausted by this choice, unless we assume as they assume that the choice has to be made up from the relation between Hamlet's mind and the world. This is an epistemological relation, but there is no reason why we could not just as well appeal to the higher and more inclusive relationships of ontology. As soon as we make this resolve, we are led to grasp the immediate and important fact that the subject and the object do not exhaust the alternatives in ontology as they seem to do in epistemology. For ontology has the power of contributing a third realm (just as epistemology has the power of requiring it, if the epistemologists only knew). This third realm is that of logical and axiological possibility, a realm of real being, a whole from which actuality selects its parts, a realm of ideals and perfections, of ultimate unity and wholeness. In this realm, there is no change, no conflict, and no partiality, albeit its status is only that of possibility and not of a superior kind of actuality. *Hamlet*, in short, lends itself perhaps also to a realistic interpretation, and by realism here is meant a belief in the independence of elements in the ontological realm of essence. It is the kind of realism which, in its broadest features, has been described many times by philos-

ophers from Plato to Peirce and Whitehead. It is that kind of realism which Hamlet describes at the level of actuality or existence when he implies the animism in which all organizations display some evidence of sensitivity however minimal, by arguing that.

> Sense, sure, you have,
> Else you could not have motion; [63]

thus insisting that all things which have motion, that is, all things which are actual or existent, also have sense. It is, too, the same kind of realism which Hamlet describes at the level of a being which is independent of actuality, which governs actuality to some extent, and which at least dictates the future of actuality, when he declares that

> There's a divinity that shapes our ends
> Rough-hew them how we will.[64]

In the former case, we have a reaction-activity very close to that described by Montaigne [65] and Bacon,[66] as quoted in the contemporary value theory of Laird [67] and Whitehead,[68] the "natural election" of all bodies all of which have some degree of "perception."

The realistic interpretation of Hamlet, using realism in the philosophical sense rather than in that current literary sense which means its direct opposite, does not depend upon the specific reading of particular passages in the play. It is

[63] *Hamlet*, III. iv, 70-1.
[64] *Hamlet*, V. ii, 10-11.
[65] *Essays*, trans. Florio, bk. II, ch. xiv.
[66] Francis Bacon, *Silva Silvarum*, quoted in A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York, 1929), p. 60.
[67] J. Laird, *The Idea of Value* (Cambridge, 1929.)
[68] A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York, 1929).

notorious that Shakespeare, like the Bible, will support almost any kind of realism. We must, however, if we wish to claim any validity for the realism of *Hamlet*, find it in the play as a whole, in the very meaning of the play, rather than in the import of those few speeches in which it appears to be stated explicitly. For the philosophy of *Hamlet* is the philosophy which underlies the play as a whole, which is to be found in it implicitly, coloring everything that is stated rather than itself being explicitly stated. What, then, is that implicit philosophy?

The Hamlet of realism is a Hamlet who understands the nature of the two ontological orders; he understands them, that is to say, as real things, and he understands them implicitly, not explicitly as philosophical concepts in the conscious minds of philosophers who merely reflect in their thoughts what has being outside of such thoughts. No; for Hamlet is no philosopher; he is rather a thoughtful prince who insists upon basing his impulsive actions upon previous rationality, by thinking about the actions which shall be expected of him a little while before they are expected. He *believes* in the two ontological orders, and that very deeply.

Let us suppose that he comprehends or, still better, that he feels the relationship between the two orders in terms of what-is and what-ought-to-be. The realm of essence is the realm of what-ought-to-be; the realm of actuality or existence is the realm of what-is. Now, assuredly, what-is is not altogether what-ought-to-be. Hamlet, as an human being, lives to some extent at both levels. Reflectively, he is able to contemplate things-as-they-ought-to-be, while at the same time he lives in an actual world of things-as-they-are. The discrepancy is too great when it happens that "the times are out of joint," and Hamlet does not feel that he should

have been the one born to set them right. He is delayed in his action of revenge for the murder of his father by the necessity for, and the difficulty of, seeing how the ideal can be made actual. In the words of one critic, "He is the prince of philosophical speculators, and because he cannot have his revenge perfect, according to the most refined idea his wish can form, he misses it altogether." [69] Hazlitt's language follows the subjectivism of his day, when ideas in the mind were confused with the universals they reflected. Hazlitt meant, of course, or at least should have meant, that Hamlet is the prince of implicit philosophical speculators, and because he cannot have his actions perfect, according to the highest ideals his thoughts can discover, he refrains altogether.

Now, that is not the end of the story. The sequel contains the tragedy. For while Hamlet is endeavoring to discover the *modus operandi* for bringing the two worlds together—the world of the perfect and the ideal on the one hand, and the world of imperfection and conflict on the other—and for making the ideal actual, events force his hand. He is driven to impulsive action by what happens around him. Having been desirous of the murder only of Claudius, he became willy-nilly the murderer of Polonius and Laertes as well as of Claudius, to say nothing of the deaths of Ophelia and Gertrude, for which he is responsible, even though unintentionally so. Through his absolute and uncompromising attitude and his unwillingness to accept anything less than perfection, he becomes a victim of the logic of events, just as do the characters in the tragedies of Aeschylus. "Hamlet," Dr. Johnson assured us, "is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the strategem

[69] Hazlitt, *op. cit., loc. cit.*

of the play, convicted the King, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing." [70]

Thus he who demanded too much of events is rewarded by becoming their helpless victim. Instead of directing events, he follows them blindly; and instead of a will which imposes his plans to some extent upon others, he allows chance to direct his adventures altogether. He had been unwilling to meet actuality halfway; he had refused to act in accordance with the nature of things which dictates that actuality shall never be perfect and that ideals mediated in their application are yet better than no ideals at all; and so actuality, conflict, irrationality took their revenge upon him in the way in which the limitations of everything actual demand: he became not a leader but one led, not a king but a corpse, together with the corpse of that same King whose place in life he had wished to take, but wished to take only upon conditions laid down by himself to life in general, and which life in general had been unwilling to accept.

The moral is that the man of contemplation, who endeavors to carry into actual practice the absolute and uncompromising variety of idealism, will end with the worse sort of impulsive, irrational and unconsidered action: undecided, immediate and arbitrary action. The tragedy of Hamlet is the tragedy of the reversal of roles of him, who, unlike Aristotle, does not admit that while one hundred is the goal, fifty is yet nearer to one hundred than is ten, and five times more desirable, even to those who long for the hundred, and who recognize the compromise involved in accepting anything less. There is a vast difference between intuitions which are based upon prior reasonings and those

[70] S. Johnson, *The Plays of Shakespeare*, vol. viii, p. 311.

which are not. The former variety is the better; reason must guide the intuition. But, having reasoned, we must be prepared to act from the reason-dictated intuitions without hesitation, almost after the fashion of the impulsive man of action whose intuitions have not had the benefit of any prior reasonings at all. To act from reason directly is to commit the fallacy of rational dogmatism, and to aid in earning reason itself a bad name.

In offering here one more interpretation of the meaning of *Hamlet*, the intention is to make a positive contribution to interpretation, but with the equipment of philosophy rather than with that of scholarship. Hence the reference to the authorities whose names have graced the scholarly tradition has only the purpose of revealing the type of criticism which the present view would afford. The heart of this chapter lies primarily in its constructive effort at interpretation and not in its destructive criticism. In brief, this interpretation depends upon the metaphysical assumption that Hamlet is the 'actual thing' *par excellence*. He has the human power of self-awareness, which all other things lack. As a consequence of this lack, actual things other than human beings are helpless playthings of the logic and chance of events. Human beings are, exceptionally, to some extent masters of their destiny. When, however, they hesitate or fail to take advantage of their power of self-awareness, or ratiocination, in order to exercise the limited control over their environment which as thinking beings they enjoy, they become, at the social level, the same helpless playthings of the logic and chance of events as the non-human actual things always are. To possess the power to reason constitutes the first human prerogative; and to possess the ability to apply the results of that reasoning, by means of what may

be called enlightened impulse, to relevant occasions for action constitutes the second human prerogative. To deny the second is to vitiate the intention of the first, and hence to precipitate chance in events shorn of their natural logic. Such at least is one possible interpretation, a philosophical one, of the meaning of the play.

Chapter XII

THE SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK OF CEZANNE

FOR some while now it has been the fashion to write about Cézanne. Numerous exhibitions of his paintings have been held and a flood of criticism in notices and books has poured forth; yet much remains to be seen and said. The reason for this is that his peculiar approach to art was the kind which continues to excite interest in the medium itself. We get from him not only an aesthetic enjoyment but an imagination stimulated to dwell upon the possibilities of painting. No derogation of other painters, whose more conventional mastery of their craft has been responsible for canvases of great truth and beauty, is implied by the impetus given to the study of aesthetics by Cézanne. It simply happens that at the turn of the century a high suggestiveness was imparted to painting at Aix.

Ever since Plato remarked that the excellence or beauty of every work of art is due to the observance of measure,[71] the ambition has actually existed in the world to measure values. No progress at all has been made in that direction, but

[71] *Statesman*, 284 A.

the aim has persisted. Along with it has always gone the belief, based on faith supported by reason, that what is to be measured is not a creation of the human imagination but rather an integral objective ingredient of the world. For obviously if a thing is to be measured, it is required first to exist. If what we wished to measure was only our own creation, then psychology could fulfill very well the task of ascertaining its character, for it would of course have no objective properties. Whenever aesthetic value is held to be subjective, or at least relative to the subject, it is also held to be non-mathematical, a product of sensations which is somehow transcendental and incurably elusive. This view has in fact often been taken. But the Platonic school of aesthetics, which has stubbornly survived, consists in precisely the opposite view. It maintains that aesthetic value does exist in its own right with its own mathematical properties, susceptible of being discovered and known as such.

The nature of measurement involves more than number. Measurement has been identified by those who recognize the prior importance of essences as treating only of surfaces. But Plato showed that measurement involves more than magnitude or the notion of greater and less; it involves also the notion of the mean.[72] The doctrine of the mean is perhaps the most distorted and generally misunderstood doctrine which has ever been set forth. It has been interpreted as the middle between two extremes, the halfway, the compromise, the average. But these are not the words Plato used to describe it. He did refer to it as a mean or standard removed from the extremes, that is true, but he also described it as "the fit and the opportune and the due." He evidently

[72] *Statesman*, 283-4.

meant by the mean some kind of just proportion and not an average.

It is a primary requisite of all logical analysis that the elements of any stage exist on the same analytical level. In the analysis of measurement, we find that at the first stage it is divided into two categories, magnitude and mean. At first glance, these do not appear to be comparable. But if we can find another pair of terms into which these can be translated, perhaps the comparability which depends upon existence at the same level of analysis will reveal itself. Such indeed is the case. Another name for magnitude is extension; would not another name for mean be intension? Thus it is the extension and intension which is to be measured. But once again we can penetrate one analytical level further, at least on the side of extension. Extension is not only number, it is order; and order is composed of number and structure. Let us substitute for our terms once more; for number we shall use algebra, and for structure geometry. Instead of order we shall refer to system. Then it is true that the specification of a system will have to be in terms of both algebra and geometry: possibly it is better to say that it will have to be in terms of the algebraic functions of a geometric system.

Such an understanding of measurement will give us a new kind of interpretation of the meaning of normative science, and of one kind of normative science in particular: aesthetics. Here the notion of a mean or average is replaced with its true idea, that of intensive proportionality. In the development of such an interpretation, particularly in aesthetics, the geometric system must be discovered before values can be assigned to it quantitatively. Thus the artist who makes assessments of the geometric properties of his subject-matter has

gone along a little on the way toward the quantitative analysis of his art. The fact that such a background of theory as we have been presenting may not be known to him explicitly is beside the point. Most artists know only something about what they are doing, and even the greatest artist is only dimly conscious of the direction toward which he is driving. The work contains what it contains, regardless of what he does or does not know. In great artists and their art, despite the obvious separation between the man and his work, there is still some faint evidence of a self-conscious knowledge of the goal and the method of attainment. In other words, only the very greatest artists know what they are doing, and they know only a little. But the work that they do does know. Occasionally what the work says and what the artist says coincide, but that is rare. They coincide in the case of Cézanne and his paintings.

It will help to clarify the observations to be made upon the nature of Cézanne's contribution to painting if we devote a few words to the most important of the environmental factors which must have been influential, before we come to his letters and canvases. The ethos, the value-atmosphere of a given date and place, colors all who live within its reach. The dates of Cézanne's life, 1839-1906, correspond to one of the most energetic periods in the advance of modern physical and biological science, and the corresponding increase in the acquaintance with the procedure of science. All the events which led to the discovery of relativity theory in macroscopic physics, of quantum theory in microscopic physics, took place roughly within these dates. It is safe to assume that what was 'in the air' for the scientists was so also, if to a lesser degree, for everyone else, in the order of their awareness and sensitivity to the forces of the day.

Cézanne, a sensitive and intelligent man, was certainly no exception. Despite his complete absorption in his painting, to the exclusion of almost all other interests, he could not very well help being somewhat under the influence of the ethos of his period. As a Frenchman living in the nineteenth century, as a man of considerable intelligence, despite the single-mindedness of his concentration upon the problems of his particular art, he could not possibly have avoided coming to some extent under the spell and meaning of natural science and its surest attributes. The most obvious merit of natural science for those who have not pursued its essential and logical definition is the method which it employs. Cézanne in painting was following a method also, the artistic method which he perhaps could not have described in detail and with all the logical rigor he held it to possess, but which he knew to exist independently of him, and to be as dependable a logical affair as the scientific method.

Artists are fond of stressing the irrational and incorrigibly individual nature of their craft, and each insists at every opportunity that only the artist he is could do what he has done. The abstract nature and generic quality of the method of art is overlooked by them as is also the eternality of the aesthetic values sought. Scientists, on the other hand, are fond of stressing the logical character of their undertaking, and they insist that others, given the same opportunities and interests, could do what they have done. The artistic and scientific methods are of course not the same but they do contain resemblances. Both are logical methods, capable of abstraction from particular instances of their application. The artist no less than the scientist can safely omit the insistence upon the peculiarity of his own contribution. Lesser

artists fear oblivion unless credit is given where it is due: to their own spirit.

The influence of Cézanne should have changed the viewpoint of the artist to one of complete detachment, for he approached his own subject-matter with all the rigor and logical objectivity of the disinterested physical scientist. He was very clear, for instance, about the distinction between the artist and his work. The work is important, he pointed out, the artist is not.[73] The distinction is strongly reinforced by the difference between the personality of Cézanne the man, and the character of his work in painting.[74] Personally he was a conservative, a self-confessedly weak creature, fearful of the wiles of the world, strongly reliant upon the Catholic Church, frugal and hard-fisted in money matters, anxious to conform in every way possible to the demands of custom, a true Provençal. His painting was far otherwise, departing sharply from what was accepted and academic in his day, marking his identification with the radicals in painting.

For Cézanne the method of painting was not unlike the method of science in its rigor and in its search for external and objective properties in nature. The few remarks which remain to us illustrate his opinion concerning the method of painting. The tart reference made in his old age to the "kingdom of engineers" [75] is belied by the scientific vocabulary which conveyed his thoughts during his flourishing. Cézanne had read Kant, and the moral "kingdom of ends" must have been in his mind. He asserted that sensations were

[73] Gerstle Mack, *Paul Cézanne* (New York, 1936, Knopf), p. 355 (hereinafter *GM*).
[74] *GM*, 18.
[75] *GM*, 18.

the basis of his work [76] and described painting by his understanding of the method as "studying," [77] more particularly as "experimenting." [78] He considered "painting as a means of expressing sensations;" [79] but not sensations subjectively considered, after the manner of psychological idealism. He meant rather "sensations *in the presence of nature*." [80] His "meditations, brush in hand" [81] was not internal; it was acute conducted observation in the service of nature, like that of the scientist. But what the artist looked for in nature differed from what the scientist sought. The resemblance had to be kept to the logical rigor of an abstract and objective method. Cézanne was no abject and slavish imitator of science and its method. He knew, for example, that there were no straight lines in nature except for the scientist [82] and that the artist would not be an artist if he put them there.

Cézanne conceived of himself after the manner of an experimental scientist; yet the purpose of his experiments, as of those of the true scientist, was not simply to record facts. For Cézanne, the "*motif*" of which he wrote [83] was of the nature of an hypothesis; it was not a fact so much as a factual suggestion for further exploration. The artist in Cézanne's view was no more a mere reporter than he was a subjective idealist spinning canvases from his own private fancies. The sensationalistic school emphasizes sensation; but

[76] *GM*, 392.
[77] Ambrose Vollard, *Paul Cézanne*, trans. H. L. van Doren (New York, 1923, Brown), p. 141.
[78] *GM*, 323.
[79] *GM*, 246.
[80] *GM*, vii. Italics mine.
[81] *GM*, 306. The words are those of Emile Bernard.
[82] *GM*, 17-8.
[83] *GM*, 239.

Cézanne's sensations in the presence of nature yielded form as well as content. The greatness of the artist is partly at least a function of the magnitude and importance of the form that he sees. He was the empirical artist, then, observing in nature the forms of geometry.

The artist

> . . . must see in nature the cylinder, the sphere, the cone, all put into perspective, so that every side of an object, of a plane, recedes to a central point. The parallel lines at the horizon give the extension, that is a section of nature, or, if you prefer, of the spectacle which the *Pater omnipotens aeterne Deus* spreads before our eyes. The perpendicular lines at the horizon give the depth. Now to us nature appears more in depth than in surface, hence the necessity for the introduction into our vibrations of light, represented by reds and yellows, of enough blue tones to make the atmosphere perceptible.

These are the words of no naive artist but [84] of the self-conscious speculator recording a full theoretical analysis. It is the geometry of the subject-matter which he is expounding in terms of a logical method, both involving complete independence and objectivity so far as the artist is concerned. The latter is introduced only as an operator compelled to a certain discovery by the admissions and limitations of the perspective he happens to occupy.

Let us apply them to a Cézanne painting, say, *La Maison du Pendu.* Here, it is obvious, the dark patch of shadow is the central point in the canvas toward which the sides of objects and planes, *i.e.*, houses in perspective, recede. There are parallel lines of the horizon and of the hillside just below it, and, to give depth, and the perpendicular lines of roof, chimney, house corner and trees. Depth in the painting is

[84] *GM*, 377-8.

certainly more in evidence than surface. And the vibrations of light, of reds and yellows, filtered through blue tones, are present as predicted. Although written some thirty-one years later than *La Maison du Pendu* was completed, Cézanne's presumably general abstraction of his form was accurate for at least one of his particular canvases and his start for many others.

Like all great pathfinders, however, Cézanne never felt that his work was complete, that he had found his road and had now only to follow it. Nor was he attempting to investigate nature in the hope that it would yield up to him its secrets in universal form; he was no victim of inverse probability. Instead, he was busily engaged in defending theory with experiment in the accepted scientific fashion. He was, as he put it, "defending theoretically the results of my experiments." [85] He had entertained profound hypotheses on the score of painting; but they were not naked: he had, he thought, some reasons for holding them. What was still necessary, what in fact is always necessary when the experimental scientist reaches the experimental or laboratory stage in his investigations, was to show that the hypotheses were *allowed* by nature, that is to say, were not disproved by any of the facts which are relevant. "The only thing that is really difficult is to prove what one believes. So I am going on with my researches" [86]—"researches in painting" [87] of course.

It was in terms of the empirical discovery of form that Cézanne found his direction. He did not seek in what he presupposed for confirmation of the forms which his sensations in the presence of nature revealed to be there. It was

[85] *GM*, 323.
[86] *GM*, 390.
[87] *GM*, 245.

in the overcoming or reconciling of obstacles put in his way by a stubborn subject-matter; otherwise he would not have complained that "Nature presents the most prodigious difficulties." [88] Nature presents no difficulties to those who are engaged in reading form *into* it; only to those extracting form out of it. We have no trouble in imagining anything; but we do have trouble in discovering what we suspect to exist externally and independently of the modes of our perception.

All artists, from the extreme of the most conventional and 'true to life' academicians to the most unrestrictedly imaginative and 'free,' must compose their works out of elements reaching them from the external world, and this is the situation whether it be self-consciously recognized or not. An unicorn is a horse having a single horn in the middle of his forehead, and while there are no actual living unicorns, there are in existence for the artists to observe, both horses and single horns. What is new in art is the relating of elements; the elements related are not new. Artists differ with respect to the particular elements their perspectives allow them to perceive, and also with respect to the particular relations which their abstract knowledge and peculiar interest compels them to introduce.

Cézanne's emphasis was not on qualitative elements but on logical ones. For him, color was not an additive quality but remained subservient to the form of which it was an integral part. "*L'esprit m'emmerde*," he exclaimed at all attempts to capture the spirit of art discursively; [89] yet he could write that he was "progressing toward the logical development of

[88] *GM*, 250.
[89] *GM*, 133.

what we see and feel by studying nature," [90] because of his logical postulates which demanded nothing less than the postulation of logic. He returned to the point again and again. "One must penetrate what is in front of one and persevere in expressing oneself as logically as possible." [91]

There is some evidence which points toward the fact that Cézanne may have been influenced by the realistic tradition of the Platonic aesthetics which is so strongly present in Schopenhauer's aesthetics if not in his metaphysics. By realism here is meant not the materialism which the term conveys in contemporary art criticism but the meaning which it has in metaphysics: that is, the theory held by Plato that values and universals have their being independently of human awareness and indeed of all actuality. Certainly Cézanne had read Schopenhauer.[92] He did not, it seems, like to talk about art, and he wasted as little time as possible on that sometimes fruitless but often stimulating variety of relaxation. Being very decided in his views, perhaps he only meant that he had little patience to expend on listening to the other man's theories. For he had very decided "theories about painting" and on occasion "deluged" his friends with them.[93] His own theory was explicit enough. "Everything, particularly in art," he wrote, " is theory developed and applied in contact with nature." [94]

Cézanne was undoubtedly a realist who believed that aesthetic values exist independently in nature and are to be discovered there by the artist. He also believed that such values have a logical structure by which they can be grasped

[90] *GM*, 390.
[91] *GM*, 379.
[92] *GM*, 240.
[93] *GM*, 358.
[94] *GM*, 364.

in art. For this purpose, he held, there exists a logical method of art. All his work as experimental in the sense that he was groping for principles, abstract and immutable, whereby the objective values which gave rise to "sensations in the presence of nature" could be recorded.

Chapter XIII

THE ART OF THE DANCE

THERE is much comfort in the thought that the values which we seek in the activity of the present are themselves impervious to time and change. Theoretically at least it would appear that there ought to be some constant relation between the values of things and their endurance: what bears the greater value ought to persist the longer. Great art has in the past frequently manifested tremendous powers of survival; frequently, yet not always. The exceptions to this hypothesis are sufficient to disprove it. We cannot, for instance, bring ourselves to believe that the sculpture of Phidias which has lasted was sufficiently worthier than the paintings of Polygnotus which have not, to merit the discrepancy in their survival periods. Nevertheless, if art has value, we cannot rid ourselves of the conviction that it ought to survive. What, then, are we to think of those arts which are notoriously ephemeral in their material? Canvases and paints are more perishable than clays and stones, quite irrespective of what is or is not done with them in painting and sculpture. And there are, besides these, arts whose very nature precludes survival.

Among the latter there stands out prominently the art of the dance. The material of the dance as an art form consists in human bodies and their movements. Ever since the discovery was made that a given man is mortal, and that his mortality could be inferred from the mortality of all human beings, a discovery which probably greatly antedates the life and death of Socrates, the material of the art of the dance has been recognized as a thing which comes into being and soon passes away. But this is true not only of the material, for the form of the dance itself has suffered a similar fate. Why? We have found the means for the recording of many subtle things, including even human speech. Can we not discover a way to preserve the form of the dance, so that a literature of the classic dance can be preserved and occasionally brought to life, just as music maintains its own achievements? Before we can enter into the rather difficult question of how to preserve the discoveries of the dance, it may be well to consider just what the dance is, and to ask of what it is that the art of the dance primarily consists.

It is a well-known fact that so far as we know there have been no danceless people. All peoples have had dances at one time or another, and have danced for one reason or another. Almost every human emotion and almost every human occasion has been celebrated in the dance. There has been a dance to solemnize marriage, to mourn death, to celebrate birth, to gird for war, to establish peace, and so forth. A list of the dances of the American Indians of various tribes would be sufficient to furnish some idea of the fantastically wide range which dancing has managed to cover. In western Europe, at the court of Louis XIV, where the ballet began with the *ballets de cour*, almost every significant event furnished the occasion for the invention and performance of

the dance, from marriages and births to military campaigns, visits of eminent foreigners and the signing of peace treaties. The fact is that dancing is a universal human activity, and includes relations with practically all other human activities. That would appear to make our problem simpler, and it does in one way, but there is another way in which it does not. For while dancing seems to have a continuity as prolonged as that of any other institution in human culture, this is not equally true of the dances themselves. The content of the dance, in so far as the dance celebrates other human activities, is irrelevant if not spurious. Dances to bring rain and dances to prepare for war have in common the fact that they are dances. And there must be an element common to all sorts of dances sufficient to enable us to recognize that they *are* dances. We have, then, the problem of discovering what this element is.

The element which various dances have in common is obviously not the function they serve or are intended to serve. We cannot hope to find in sexual pleasure, religious supplication or political rejoicing that common thread which holds the dances together. We must, in other words, learn to distinguish between the dance as a celebration and the dance as an art. The element which makes an art of the dance is obviously some secondary quality, often unknown and unintended; and this quality we may name the aesthetic quality. For while the dance may, it is true, give sexual pleasure, appease the desire for religious supplication or furnish an outlet for the celebration of some successful solution to a political issue, and while those persons dancing may regard any other purpose as secondary and even incidental and unnecessary to the human satisfactions which the dance seems to have furnished, it still may be that the secondary purpose

of the dance is, from the point of view of the dance itself, that is, from the point of view of the objective conditions of the dance as a thing in the world, more important than the primary. In essence the dance is an art among other arts and yet in some way set apart from them. We shall have to call upon some prior definition of art, and then examine the dance empirically in order to discover how under that definition the particular art of the dance can be singled out from the others.

The universality of dancing among human beings raises another and more serious difficulty in the path of the attempt to understand the nature of the art of the dance. Plainly, there can be no such thing as a conscious art-form which is (a) not accomplished by human beings for the most part, and which is (b) devoted exclusively to human beings. So far as (a) is concerned, it is clear that the plastic arts, for instance, are worked by human beings, although with objective materials and for the achievement of a purpose which lies beyond human beings in that the works of art which are made are expected, if they prove to have any value, to survive objectively and independently the lives of the artists who are responsible for them. How does this apply in the case of the dance? The art of the dance works not with objective materials but in a sense with subjective ones: with the bodies of human beings themselves. The objective materials employed are obviously only supporting and extraneous materials, such as costumes, scenery, etc. The dance, like other arts, is accomplished by human beings; thus far there is no difficulty. But (b) does raise a difficulty, for while other arts have an objective purpose which merits survival beyond the lives of artists, the dance does not seem

to do so equally. When the dancers die, the dances they have performed die with them.

The objection to the argument raised in the assumption of this position may consist of the argument from choreography. Choreography is the structural part of the dance, the record, often written, of dance forms and the design of particular dances. But is there any actual choreography worthy of the name? Can we argue for choreography as we can, say, for written music? There have been, of course, elaborate systems of names, notations and instructions for dances, but these have always been fairly crude when we consider the intricacies and complexities, the subtle variations and differences, possible to the moving human form. The range of dance forms that have been practiced at one time and place or another is almost too great to contemplate, including as it does everything from the complex group dances of primitive peoples to the comparatively simple closed couple, turning dances of our modern Western society. But even in the latter case, what success can choreography have had? Many of us know to our sorrow that we may take lessons from professionals in the art of the dance, we may learn the steps carefully one after the other, and still ourselves not be able to execute them with any rhythm or grace. How can we expect to write down for others dances which we ourselves are unable to learn well at first hand? And if this is partly true of simple, closed couple, turning dances, how much more true must it be of complex group dances?

Let us leave for a moment the question of the recording of dances, in order to ask another question which may prove more fundamental. For we still have to settle the problem arising from the fact that there can be no conscious art-form

which is devoted exclusively to human beings. Subjectivists will be inclined to wonder about that; it will seem to them that the end of all the arts is the serving of human beings in some way or other. Thus we are driven back to the question of what art in general is for. To philosophers who have any faith in logic, the question will sound like a demand for the definition of art, as indeed it is. We are not likely to discover a definition which will satisfy everybody, but, since we do require a definition in order to proceeed with our inquiry it may as well be a definition which has some chance of satisfying at least the demands of the present inquiry. To the philosophical realist, that is, to one who believes in the independent being of universals and values quite apart from all considerations of knowledge and experience, there is a contradiction between 'art-form,' on the one hand, and the qualification, 'devoted exclusively to human beings,' on the other. For if to be real means to exist, or to have being, independent of the knowledge and experience of human beings, then to be a real art-form must mean to be an art-form independent of human knowledge and experience.

At this point it is essential to introduce a distinction between the historical origins of things and the logical status of things. While theoretically works of art would not have to be made by human beings in order to be works of art, since a work of art made by any other action, such as the action of a river on wood, or of earth movements on stone, would equally be a work of art, it is true nevertheless that most works of art of which we do have knowledge and experience are works of art made by human beings. Yet the fact that works of art come about through human agency does not limit them to human ends. We may, in support of this thesis, paradoxically raise the rather hazardous question

of why artists themselves produce works of art. The motives of artists are mixed; some work for fame, others for money. But there are still others who may work for what we call an unmixed and pure motive: for the satisfaction of the artistic impulse itself. This impulse is not directed primarily toward such secondary ends as money-making or fame-seeking (though these and others like them may be present) but toward the appreciation of the values of being. The artistic process is a kind of inquiry, directed toward the discovery of values hitherto not available, or toward the enrichment of values which are available only in a more tenuous form. The pure artistic impulse is a detached and disinterested one that does not aim at the benefiting of the artist but on the contrary involves the giving of himself by the artist to a considerable degree. It is a form of worship, a way of appreciating the existence of values, without there being necessarily any benefit from the action except the highly secondary and derived benefit of relief. The psyche of the artist is temporarily relieved by the practicing of the artistic process, which consists in the objectification of some artistic increment, much as, in a cruder way, his physiological organism is relieved by cruder forms of evacuation. He does what he does because he must, and because he feels emptier and weaker but better after he has done it. The function of art, then, directs the artist to something which lies or ought to be made to lie outside himself. That something consists of values which had not before been actualized but which had had their being as possibilities until the artist had succeeded in actualizing them.

We are now in a position to return to our original dilemma and to reconsider it in the light of the viewpoint which insists that to be made a work of art means to have some existence independent of the artist, an independence toward

which he himself strove when he was engaged in its making. The conscious art-form must not, indeed cannot, be 'devoted exclusively to human beings.' The dance is, as we have already noted, an art, and it is, moreover, an art in which human bodies together with their movement furnish both the form and the material. In what sense is an art so composed successful in attaining anything, any values, which are independent of the human being? The question sounds like an impossible one, since it seems to contain a contradiction. The contradiction consists in the fact that an art which uses the human being as a means is expected to answer to one of the objective requirements of art by furnishing an end beyond the human. It is our task, then, to show that this contradiction can be resolved. The resolution will rely upon our being able to draw the same distinction between the performances of the dance and the purpose for which the dance is performed. It should be unnecessary to add that our understanding of the non-human end of art does not preclude its having an incidental and proximate human end. Works of art made by human beings naturally give rise to the delight of appreciation in human beings. We have simply to insist that this is not their chief end, however much it may be a very desirable by-product.

First of all it will be necessary to rule out human motives. We have observed that practically every kind of human purpose is served by dances of one sort or another, and that among these may be counted hunting, war, the fertility of crops, erotic excitement. These are human ends and they are served by the dance, and no doubt the dance is served to some extent by them in the sense of being stimulated by them. But they are not the chief ends of the dance. For they differ among themselves while the dance in being a dance

does not differ in serving them. There is, therefore, a property of the dance which does not find its motive in the human ends, individual and social, which the dance may incidentally serve. The human body may be the material of the dance but it is not the end for the sake of which the dance exists. The human body so far as the dance is concerned is a symbol referring beyond the human to the artistic, to the values independent of human beings in terms of which works of art represent human awareness and adoring. We may presume that the chief end of the art of the dance is identical with that of art in general, that the dance is intended primarily to serve the end of actualizing value which was not hitherto actual and of enriching values which have but a tenuous hold on existence.

The dance is an art executed by the movement of human bodies. The human body together with its movements is in this connection simply the material of the dance. We may conceive of artists of the dance employing their bodies in the same extraneous way in which they might employ a seemingly more objective material, such as musical instruments, clay, or building materials. To the extent to which the artist employs his body in this way it is an artistic material and not *his* body, and this assertion is in no way dimmed by the fact that his body is the exclusive material of the dance. The human body of the artist is also employed by the artist in other arts; he must make motions and perform actions with his body when he paints, carves stone, or writes music, say; but in these cases the human body is not the *only* artistic material, whereas in the dance it is. Nevertheless, the human body, in the case of the dance, is just as much an objective artistic material as any other medium in any other art, and must be so regarded. Thus we may conclude that the dance

is an art in which the human body exclusively is employed in order to actualize values beyond the human which were not hitherto actualized, or to enrich such values having but a tenuous hold on existence.

There is no accepted definition of art or beauty which can be applied officially to the art of the dance. There is, therefore, no unfaithfulness to traditional principles in arbitrarily establishing a pair of definitions and in assigning them to the duty of serving as the universals regarding art under which the art of the dance can be a particular case. There are good metaphysical as well as empirical reasons for supposing that beauty consists in the internal elections of the whole for the parts, the intrinsic elections of things, the perfection and harmony of the whole. Art is the deliberate apprehension of beauty. Since here we are primarily concerned with the art of the dance rather than with the fascinating but exceedingly complex question of the nature of art, we shall assume that this definition of art is acceptable, and proceed to examine further the nature of the particular art which is the art of the dance.

The artist seems to derive much satisfaction from the thought that in his art, whichever it may be, other arts are combined and employed, and that therefore it is supreme among the arts. For instance, it has been observed that in the dance the plastic arts and music are conjoined and utilized. Most dances are danced to music of some sort, and they are plastic in that they are constituted of variations upon the same geometry that characterizes painting and sculpture, with the addition that in the case of dancing we have the mathematics of motion. Were this to be the truth, then music would be among the lowliest of the arts; for music is employed by other arts but itself employs no other. But there

is no genuine derogation of music attained thereby; music is as great as any other art. To attempt to discover a hierarchy or gradation existing among the arts by means of which the arts could be placed over or under one another in terms of their relative value is an effort which has not succeeded thus far, however valuable the ambition may be. Art is art; and any art which furthers the end of art is as much an art (though not necessarily as much *of* art) as any other. It is illuminating that the dance seems to resemble the plastic arts in its movement and to borrow from music in its rhythms, but it does not wholly explain the dance. We want to account for the dance not only by explaining that it is an art, and by its chief artistic purpose which does not distinguish it from the other arts, but by also explaining its uniqueness among the arts and the peculiarities whereby it is set apart. If we can accomplish this second step, we shall have satisfied the classic demands of definition in that we shall have explained the genus art of which dancing is a species and the nature of the difference which sets the dance apart from other species. Then we can at least make the claim of having offered an attempt to understand the nature of the art of the dance.

Wherein does the dance differ from other arts? We have already stated one difference in asserting that the dance employs as material the human body exclusively, for that is true of no other art, and we have also asserted that in using the human body as material the dance has accepted a means which is exceedingly ephemeral: not only do human bodies pass away, but the movements in which those bodies engage while dancing are even more temporary and even sooner lost. But the singularity of the dance does not stop there. Man *qua* man exists at many empirical levels. He has a physical

being, in that he has mass, density and dimensions in common with other objects which have only physical properties, *e.g.*, a mountain. But he also has biological properties, such as life, with its growth, self-repair and reproduction; and these he shares with other biological beings which have only biological properties, *e.g.*, a paramecium. Similarly, he also has psychological and social properties. Now, art is a phenomenon existing at the social, or cultural, level; it is an institution of human society by means of which society endeavors to reach beyond the human. If the art of the dance is that art which employs as material the human body exclusively, the next question ought to be, how much of the human body does it employ? For by human body is here meant the body of the human being, and the human being consists of all the levels we have enumerated as well as others which we have not seen fit to mention. The question is confusing and seems to be quite foolish, since obviously all arts employ all levels. Each empirical level supports the levels above it and is supported by those below; and since art exists as a social phenomenon, it must exist at the social level, and if it exists at the social level it must employ all the levels below the social. And if this is true of all the arts, why then it cannot be used as a criterion to distinguish the art of the dance.

The difficulty seems to require that we abandon this part of the investigation, but we are not justified in doing so until we have introduced every bit of relevant evidence. We have, as a matter of fact, left out one thing. We have left out the fact that dancing is peculiarly a social art. Other arts are also social to some extent: they may be executed in public as well as in private. But the dance, it may be claimed, is executed usually by more than one person and usually also with musical accompaniment and with an audience. The

individual dance is conceivable, but it would mean the dance executed by an individual for himself without audience or orchestra or partners. This is theoretically possible but not practically attainable. There is such a thing as an individual 'dancing for joy,' let us say, within the sanctity of his own quarters, for instance upon the receipt of some especially good news. But such dancing is minimal, at best, and only by some stretch of the term, art, could it be described as an example of the art of the dance. The vast majority of formal dances—and we are only entitled to include dances which are formal under the formal category of the *art* of the dance—are intended to be executed by two or more persons, with musical accompaniment and before onlookers.

There are, then, two ways in which the art of the dance can be distinguished from other arts. These ways can be divided into the individual and the social. On the individual side, the dance is the only art which employs the movement of the human body exclusively as its material. On the social side, the dance is the only art which is able to be executed only in public.

We have reached a formulation of the dance—tentative and nothing more—which will at least enable us to talk about it. In employing the movement of the human body as its material, the dance adopts a means which is capable of enormous variations. The movements of the human body are limited only by the possibilities of the physiological and anatomical functions, more specifically by the skeletal and neuromuscular systems. These are mechanical limitations; yet the possibilities they prescribe are simply enormous. In a world where there are millions of people, it is still possible to identify individuals by their casual gait in walking, a remarkable enough fact. The variations of human movement in an

unstudied way are innumerable; how many more must there be in a planned sequence of movements? The logic of the dance is a selection from the logic of human movement: poses, stretches of muscle, transitions from one movement to another, formal patterns consisting of sets of movements. All the variations, for instance, which are known to music are also possible to the dance. There can be in movement the theme-and-variations pattern, the fugal pattern of imitative movement, even contrapuntal movement. And of course the dance has and can invent patterns of its own. The dance has been said to be geometry in motion, and the art is also related to sculpture and architecture in being a plastic medium.

Although the dance has had a long history, being in all probability as old as human life, its history as a formal art has not reached to any highly advanced stage. The art of the dance may be said to be in its infancy. Evidence of this contention is offered in the fact that in many ways the art of the dance has retrogressed rather than advanced in the hands of advanced cultures. The ballet, unfortunately, in most countries is still caviar to the general; while the existence of extremely formal yet immensely popular dances among more primitive peoples is an established fact. Has advanced culture any dances to offer more complex than those of the Pueblo Indians of the American Southwest? Is Western dancing as advanced over primitive dancing as Western music is over primitive music? Have we produced any Bach of the dance?

Such progress is most likely to be expected at some time in the distant future. It will depend for its occurrence upon two developments. Thus far, our emphasis is placed more on the dance itself than on the choreography of the dance. We tend to think more in terms of the dance itself, and less in terms

of the written exposition and invention of the dance. Before we can expect to develop great dances, we must learn to place choreographers on a plane with if not on one higher than those interpretive artists who perform the dances. There are few Beethovens in the world's history, but in every generation there is a considerable number of conductors and orchestras which are able to play his music well and to present it to an appreciative public. This situation must be produced in the dance as well as in music. We must learn to know and to appreciate choreographers as those who are initially and chiefly responsible for the dance, just as composers are responsible for music. The training of a great choreographer of necessity must be a tremendous undertaking, for the requirements of choreography are considerable. The choreographer must have more than a passing knowledge of, among other topics, anatomy, painting, music and geometry. He must have the imagination of a discoverer in the arts, like that of Bach, of Cézanne, of Phidias. And, above all, he must know the dance.

But of course there will be no great choreographers until there is a completely developed dance notation. The present systems are far from adequate; they are crude and improvised, where they need to be subtle and rationally planned. The notation of the dance is still at the crudely qualitative level. Music reserves its qualitative terms, terms such as *adagio, pianissimo, crescendo,* for degrees of expression and phrasing, while for the chief notation it has quantitative marks, such as the whole notes, half notes and quarter notes of the musical scale. In the notation of the dance, however, the qualitative terms alone are used, and such indications as *ballon, arabesque, entrechat* and *fouette* are called upon to do yeoman service. A dance notation is not entirely like

an human language, which has grown up almost of its own accord, with a strict fundamental groundwork of pattern yet abounding in exceptions and irregularities. It must be, initially, at least, more formal, and it must admit of no exceptions, since the performance of the dance, given the wide variation in human form and capabilities, will introduce exceptions enough.

Given the career of choreographer as a recognizable profession, and a dance notation capable of exact yet inclusive expression, great things indeed can be expected of the future of the dance. We may paraphrase Whitman and say that to have great dances, we need great audiences, too, and these will be forthcoming as the formal art of the dance shows more enterprise. There are signs of life already springing up here and there. There have been and are such dancers as Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman, Martha Graham, Hanya Holm and many others too numerous to mention. There are, in addition to the choreographers of the exiled Russian ballet, many masters of the dance in the U.S.S.R. Russia and England offer perhaps the greatest and most appreciative audiences. But the material of the native folk dances has not yet been tapped; and it is extremely likely that more is to be expected from the efforts of such choreographers and dancers as Katherine Dunham and Agnes de Mille than from those employing other approaches. We shall see.

It is certainly true that there are now new artificial aids that the dancer and choreographer of the past could not call upon. Chief among these is the motion picture. The recording and subsequent study of folk dances is made possible by the use of the film, and the same technique is available for our formal dances as well. The film is more than an instrument which enables us to present exotic dances to an

appreciative audience. It is a method whereby techniques can be studied and the art of the dance carried forward, by dancers and choreographers alike. To achieve both these aims, the film will have to return to its old stationary position. We do not wish to be deceived by montage and cutting; we do not, in other words, wish to be presented with the art of the film employing the ballet as a means; we wish merely to use the film as an aid in studying and improving the ballet. It will help us, of course, to get a long continuity shot taken from above, for then we can study grouping as we have never done before, and we can see it as it is in fact always seen from the highest balcony in the theatre. But, for the rest, we do not need or even want the technique of the moving camera. We do not wish what we now receive: disjointed shots, taken from various angles, of the same dances, done in such a way that continuity is lost and the parts substituted for the whole, thus throwing emphasis upon virtuosity rather than upon the dance itself. The very value of the film is at present abandoned by the film, and this is its ability as a *moving* picture to present the dance as a whole in proper continuous sequence from beginning to end. The film is a mechanism which can aid us to understand the accomplishments of the dance and also to study its enormous possibilities, did we but use it to its full advantage.

In comprehending the dance, then, as an art differing from, yet intimately connected with, other arts, to be discovered by choreographers and then performed by dancers rather than improvised in the heat of the dance by the dancers themselves; in devising a systematic choreography and an adequate notation; and in availing ourselves of the aid of the recording moving picture film; finally, in learning to rely upon trained choreographers who avail themselves of artistic im-

pulses based upon both other arts and upon relevant sciences, we are on our way toward the wide expansion of the dance as an art whose greatest performance is enduring rather than ephemeral and thus lies largely in the future. How near, or how remote, this future will be depends chiefly upon how quick we are to comprehend and take complete advantage of the present potentialities.

Chapter XIV

THE AIMS OF ARCHITECTURE

ARCHITECTURE as a fine art has special difficulties to meet, obstacles with which the other fine arts are not confronted. The peculiar difficulties center about the combination of the two functions of the aesthetic and the utilitarian, and the vast social effort required for the execution of a single work of any importance. In most other respects, the problems of architecture are those of any art; therefore the present discussion will be devoted chiefly to these points.

The task of architecture may be stated as the solution to the problem of how space is to be enclosed for human occupancy in a work of fine art. Human occupancy offers a wide range of possibilities to begin with and these are increased as the knowledge of materials grows and mechanical obstacles are surmounted by the rapid acquirement of new techniques. Similarly, there is a great purity to the problems of the enclosure of space, limited only by the conditions which are described in the theory of statics. But an important question immediately arises, one which somehow manages to confuse the apparent simplicity of aim, and this is as follows: given

the requirement of suitability for human occupancy and the conditions for enclosure of space dictated by statics, how are the demands of aesthetic beauty and utilitarian function to be reconciled? For architecture is a fine art that produces buildings which are put to the greatest variety of utilitarian functions. A barn may or may not be a beautiful barn but it is a barn in any case and functions continually as such.

There are, of course, those who say that the usefulness of a building is its entire function, and that any other, being superfluous, may at will be read into it or out of it. The farmer who orders the construction of a barn wishes to have it made as cheaply as possible without hurting its efficiency; and he is concerned, let us say, with nothing else. But the aesthetician maintains that the farmer is wrong, for, adds he, the farmer could have no efficient barn were it not also beautiful, since its efficiency depends upon its beauty.

In general, however, each admits the validity of the claims of the other. Although in an age of the applications of pure science, such as our own, the claims of utilitarianism tend to take the upper hand, those of aesthetics still persist. The utilitarian says, form follows function; the aesthetician says, a good form produces a good function. Since both admit interdependence, the question reduces to a matter of priority rather than to one of exclusivity: which has the greater claim? Should an edifice of utility be constructed and then regarded as an object of beauty and art, or on the other hand should a work of art be made and then employed as an utilitarian object? Or perhaps the issue is not so simple as this alternative would indicate; perhaps we should ask whether the demands of utility constitute a framework through which to work toward an object of beauty and art, or should the most efficient utilitarian objects be proclaimed

by fiat the most beautiful and themselves the only true objects of art?

We do not have preserved for us the many ancient architectural records, few indeed except the remains of the edifices themselves. What the architects of Assyria, of Egypt or even of Greece had in mind, so far as abstract theory is concerned, is a matter which has been forgotten. James Ferguson in Great Britain and Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright in America have proclaimed the dogma that form follows function; a dogma around which other conditions, such as available materials, immediate environment, and function to be followed, of course, are expected to be fitted. But every owner who authorizes his contractor to furnish the plans, and who thus goes without benefit of architect, on the assumption that plans are relatively unimportant to anyone who knows what the owner wants in the way of a building and has some knowledge of the principles of engineering construction, is an implicit and perhaps unconscious advocate of the functional school. Although the builder who builds without an architect is settling for a much more pedestrian interpretation of the creed that form follows function, and producing something which is entirely different from what we have learned to expect from the followers of Wright, by naive interpretation the dry bones of the creed have been laid bare.

But will the history of architecture support the contention that form follows function? Let us consider for a moment the history of Western architecture in comparison with the development of Western culture. The sequence of Western architecture: Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Modern, reveals a random dialectic of principles of construction as well as an equally random di-

alectic of aesthetic grandeur. The peaks in construction are: Greek, Gothic, Modern. The peaks in grandeur are also: Greek, Gothic, Modern. A similarity of achievement marks both features as they run parallel courses. It has been argued that the height of Christian religious power in the Middle Ages was also the height of church architecture, hence the glory of Gothic cathedrals. But the fact is that Christian faith was probably at its height in the fourth century, not in the thirteenth. Early Christian architecture was made out of the rubble or transformation of Roman basilicas, and produced nothing very notable. The thirteenth century witnessed the highest point in the *organization*, rather than in the *faith*, of the church. The achievements of Hellenistic and Byzantine culture were not primarily religious, yet advances in church construction were nevertheless accomplished. The progress which is to be noted in the knowledge of principles of construction in the history of Western architecture reflects something of the cultures in which such knowledge developed, but there is no one-to-one correspondence between cultural influences and the knowledge of structural principles and practices. Just as Roman society replaced Greece's dynamic social freedom with its own principle of static obedience, so Roman architecture consigned the one-story constructive Greek Orders to the humbler role of decoration in their own concrete, storied edifices of poured walls and groined vaulting. Romanesque architecture, in turn, replaced the inert stability of Roman architecture with the principle of equilibrium, which Gothic architecture was later to add to its own newly introduced principle of elasticity.

When we say that form follows function, we have failed to be sufficiently explicit: what function is being followed? Quite naturally, form follows function. In its literal inter-

pretation this claim is undeniable. If we were to assert the opposite, namely, that function follows form, we should have left open the question of which form was to be followed. There are, it will be remembered, several: the utilitarian and the aesthetic. An architectural form, a building, constructed without any thought of what use the building was to be put to would be an odd-looking affair indeed, and it is doubtful whether any such building has ever been constructed. When an easel painting or a piece of sculpture is executed, it is always with the knowledge of the use to which it will be put. The painting will adorn a wall where it will be looked at straight-on and enjoyed for its beauty. The sculpture will be placed on a pedestal, a little out from the wall or in the middle of the room, or perhaps in a garden, where it can be seen from all angles and enjoyed for its beauty.

Let us admit that form follows function. A work of art is always dependent upon the importunateness of the particular purpose which it will serve, but as a work of art it is always more important than such purpose. But let us, then, ask, what function does it follow? In the case of the work of fine art which is some architectural construction, there are two use-functions to choose from. The building may be occupied and it may be enjoyed for its beauty. From the human point of view, both are use-functions, since both are human needs which may be fulfilled.

Here again we run into a difficulty, for the question is not as simple as this dichotomy would lead us to believe. Suppose that we consider the first use-function for a moment. The building may be occupied—but by whom and to what end? A building which is to be a dwelling has a different function to perform than one which is to be a church. And in the church, does not the beauty of the building—which as

we saw is its other use-function—have anything to do with its perfect functioning as an edifice constructed for the purpose of housing worship? In the religious edifice, to pursue our example somewhat further, the utilitarian function is sufficiently tenuous to require symbolic treament. Take the Gothic cathedral, for instance. In the Gothic cathedral the entire skeleton of piers, the ribbed vaulting, the pointed arches, the flying buttresses which appear to hang from what they actually support and which are lifted to the sky by those very pressures they help to transmit to the ground, all aid in aiming toward the sky in a gigantic effort of symbolism the system of complex energy which joins the beauty of the building to its most commonplace use-function, the religious worship which it was raised to house. The beauty of the house of worship has an undeniable effect upon its usefulness as a house of worship. The second use-function has an important bearing on the first, and the distinction is seen in all its arbitrariness and even falsity.

But it is perhaps in monuments that we find architecture at its purest. This is true in theory, even if it has not always been so in practice. The kind of monument referred to here is the one that celebrates events, such as the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens to support a tripod in celebration of athletic competitions, or Wren's monument to commemorate the great London fire. It is the task of architecture to express values and their logic by means of physical structures. In the sense that such values are actualized architecturally, it might be said that every architectural structure has its function as a monument, its monumental aspect, so to speak. But in the pure monument, that is to say, in the structure erected to be a monument, we have arrived at the idea of a building which has, or, at least, may have no housing

function. Some monuments are not intended to be entered but are merely on view. It is in these that architecture seeks to achieve the endurance of values in the most unequivocal way.

Let us name the two human use-functions, occupancy and aesthetic enjoyment or, more simply, enjoyment. Let us consider these as the functions of the interest aspect of the value of buildings. For, obviously, the buildings have values which are quite independent of any human interest in them which may exist. A building is beautiful or it is potentially capable of occupancy without the necessity of there being any one to enjoy the beauty of the building or to live in it. The actual practice of these functions means the appreciation or apprehension of the values, their valuation. We can be interested only in the interest- or use-functions, with the understanding that the values which the use of interest employs does not depend upon such employment.

The occupancy function rests directly upon the social occasion which is the human need for shelter. It seems more intimately associated with the mechanical or engineering aspects of architecture. It is when we think of occupancy that we tend to associate with it the stresses, compressive, tensile, shear and bending movement; or the structural principles, such as wooden truss, post and lintel, masonry arch, and steel skeleton. But buildings are not merely elevations which have been raised over a ground plan. Like sculpture, which Rodin declared is the fine art of making holes and bumps, architecture, in all its various phases and periods, has employed an endless succession of varying combinations of geometric forms, the evidently inexhaustible repetition of circle, rectangle, triangle and ellipse. The nature of space is such that the plastic arts, among which we must count architecture,

can never get very far from geometry. Occupancy and enjoyment meet and merge at the point where utility begins to employ the established rhythms of geometry.

The enjoyment function is thus not so easily eliminated. Even a building erected according to such narrow requirements and held strictly accountable to the economic level which occasioned it, might age in time, and in aging might acquire that patina or softening which increases its store of beauty by making its parts appear to be in perfect relation to the whole.

It should be borne in mind that age does not always produce the harmony which so often appears to develop with it. There is, after all, the old and ugly as well as the old and beautiful; and this is as true of facades as it is of faces.

Too often form is identified with rules or traditional practices while function is identified with freedom, and the rules are felt to be inimical to the achievement of the freedom, thus deepening the abyss between form and function in the mind of the architect. The Italians of the late Renaissance rose in rebellion against the rules established by the Augustan architect, Vitruvius. They felt his narrow rules as an argument against the existence of stricture in general, and the irrational freedom which followed was felt by the Italian architects of the day as an over-direction, inimical to validated constructive principles, just as today our plastic artists feel (mistakenly enough) that spontaneity and novelty require freedom from rationality. But limitations do not always confine. The basic rules of architecture are of course dependent upon the principles of statics, that branch of dynamics which treats of bodies at rest relative to some given frame of reference and with the interaction of forces between them; these principles are tools for the architect, like clay in the hands

of the sculptor; and they, together with the knowledge of previous architectural styles and features: for example, the Doric Order, the triumphal arch, the vault, the clerestory, the flying buttress, employed as limitations and suggestions, allow rather than restrict the potential buildings which are available to the imagination of the informed yet intuitive worker in the art. To be strictly fair about the relation of form to function, it is probable that at first in the history of architecture, form did follow function. Primitive architecture strove to confine buildings to their use-function on mechanical principles alone. This was effort enough, given the scant knowledge of construction and the sparse use of materials available to primitive man. As soon, however, as the utilitarian problem began to be solved, design and decoration followed. Everything has been employed in every type of construction as decoration or embellishment, and no peoples, not even the most economic, such as the Sumerians, the Assyrians, or the modern Americans, have failed to employ embellishments entirely lacking in economic function. Illustrative wall decorations and bas relief, friezes on the tympana in the pediments, gargoyles, surface decoration of geometric patterns, the list is endless. The second stage, then, is that of gratuitous design. Modern architecture seeks to return to the simplicity and singleness of the use-function but with more powerful equipment, equipment which, it is hoped, will wrest from concentration on the use-function alone the perfect relation of parts in the whole, the harmony, in which the beauty consists.

From the point of view of modern architecture, it would appear that beauty, like happiness, is a by-product of the search for something else and cannot be pursued for its own sake. But to take this division too seriously is to cut off the

mechanism from its purpose, the means from its end. For it is simply impossible to consider the function of a thing and the proper execution of the means toward that function without also considering the form which that means will take. Nothing could be more erroneous than the supposition, put forth by Ruskin for instance, that the structure of a building was an affair for engineers and that the artistic part consisted in the facing and decoration, with which alone the architect should concern himself. Form does not evolve out of function as an excrescence: it is an essential part of the execution of the function and must therefore be thought of along with it. Another difficulty with the approach of modern architecture, one which amply illustrates the consequences of the neglect of form for its own sake, is that it commits the fallacy of simplicity. The perfect relation of parts in the whole (in contradistinction to the qualitative aspect of that relation) can make a difference between wholes when one has more parts than the other. Obviously, a whole having only two parts does not have the difficulty in setting them in perfect relation that a whole having two hundred parts has. By a like argument, the beauty (or the complexity of functioning) of the latter is potentially greater. It is just possible that a thing of beauty must turn out to be also a thing well made. Yet there is an enormous distinction between things well made and things excellently made, between art in the first sense and the fine arts in the second. The distinction takes visible form in the shape of deliberate distortion. The strangeness in the proportions of works of fine art are vectors pointing away from what is and toward what ought to be. A house is not merely an efficient machine for human occupancy. Modern architecture has oversimplified the process, and overcorrected the evil which it came to

suppress. But, for all that, its aim has been in the right direction, since it is necessary to clear the ground of obstructions before anything of value can be erected.

It may now be time to reconsider the problem of complexity in the light of the recent achievements in the direction of simplicity. The abdication of beauty as a first consideration in favor of usefulness, or, in the terminology we have adopted, the elimination of the enjoyment-function and the substitution of the occupancy-function, may have seriously impaired the latter, and this might be true even though, as we know, first things may not always be put first, since what is first historically is not always first in importance; there are different hierarchies ranged according to different canons of selection, and the same items will appear in a different place in the order when another canon is employed. We have learned to confuse the complex with the superfluous and the ornate with the rococo so far as decoration is concerned. Yet the period of architecture which modern taste chiefly endorses—with some longing, we may suppose —is the Gothic. In the Gothic, with its pointed arch, mullioned window and high-pitched gable, decoration is imbedded in the whole, and even sculpture must justify itself, unlike the conditions of the Renaissance, by becoming something architectonic, without losing sight of the architectural whole. But the road back is not just a simple reversal. Other considerations must now be taken into account; there are now new requirements and new techniques with which to satisfy them.

We must continue to seek a solution to our problem in the old controversy between beauty and usefulness, despite their difference of roles under different canons of selection. The great inventions of architecture have been mechanical

ones, and it is the utilitarian nature of architecture which gives it its aspect of an applied science. To a certain extent, too, it is merely applied science. Architecture as an art no doubt had its beginnings in the decorative rhythms of utilitarian shelter. But it soon passed beyond this to the established rhythms of applied mathematics in a beautiful edifice, an edifice which incidentally also had its utilitarian aspect. Just as music is, in a sense, aesthetically applied arithmetic, so architecture is aesthetically applied geometry. There is a point at which the mechanical inventions of architecture pass over into something else containing an aesthetic property. Is the column or the vault a purely mechanical invention? But on the other hand and more particularly, is the cupola on pendentives or the ogival transept a purely artistic affair? We can see an ample illustration of this subtle difference and shading in the case of the artistic products of a predominantly utilitarian culture. When a utilitarian culture develops works of art, it perforce always does so on older patterns, and when it produces works of art on older patterns it naturally fails to produce great ones. Steel surfaced to resemble the grain of wood, and rubber designed to appear like marble, were the first adaptations of the new construction materials to an older style, and they were indescribably ugly. But can we discover anything better in the practice of facing inferior materials with sheets of superior ones—lining brickwork with marble slabs, for instance; or using cast-iron to imitate carved stone? Such were the early art constructions of the utilitarian culture, for its utilitarian objects are apt to have more beauty than its art constructions.

The civilization of the United States has been to date primarily, though of course not entirely, a civilization produced by the mechanical engineer. The result is that American

bridges are more beautiful and more highly original than American churches. Traditional architecture as copied in America raises some pertinent architectural questions, questions which are also of general aesthetic interest. The Gothic churches of America are sometimes beautiful but always anomalous, particularly when they are disproportionately small. In many cities, one is now able to see the *small* copies of the Gothic cathedral. These violate a law of the transmission of aesthetic styles between cultures. The law requires that when objects of art are copied more or less faithfully, the proportions and range of interest must be increased correspondingly. The copy of an object of art has got to be larger than the original and its environment must be taken into account even where this was not done with the original. When aesthetic discoveries are applied (which is being done when we copy a work of art in the hope that the copy will retain or possess the beauty of the original), it is always necessary to make the application to a wider area. It is sometimes possible (though not at all usual) that the beauty of the copy may be greater than that of the original. This does not mean that the second architect deserves any aesthetic credit; his may be merely a technical engineering accomplishment. But we must not be guilty of confusing beauty, which is objective, with credit for beauty, which in a way is subjective. The issue of usefulness is involved here too, of course. From the viewpoint of utility, all of the pyramids erected in Egypt were equally important. From the viewpoint of credit to the artist, the architect of the first one alone was important. From the viewpoint of beauty, the last one may have been more beautiful than those erected earlier.

The farther we proceed in architectural achievement, the more social our considerations must become. The first archi-

tect was probably also the contractor and the laborer, as well as the manufacturer of the raw materials. But now, just as research scientists operate in teams, so must architects. Masses of workers of course have long been required. Both in building problems and in the social ramifications of the final erections, the number of people who are immediately involved and eventually affected tends to increase markedly. For the work of art which is the edifice is also the human social environment. In building houses to be our own surroundings, however, we cannot allow the process to stop there but must take *their* environment into consideration. The range of hierarchy of interests increases to include landscape gardening and town-planning, and fades away into the environment of the whole social group. Aesthetically, the values of architectural achievements are as high as beauty; practically, the effects of architectural construction are as wide as human culture.

Architecture raises the question of the participation of the individual and the social group in artistic achievements. Obviously, the role of the individual is paramount, as we have noted in an earlier chapter, since without the psyche of the individual, there would be no artistic intuition. The original conception of the architect is undoubtedly that of some individual. However, the extent of this truth can be exaggerated, as the participation of the individual always tends to be exaggerated in modern times. Scientific investigation is recognizing more and more the value of research teams, a method which in the arts (though perhaps in a less explicit fashion) is already an old story. The Egyptian pyramids, the Greek temples, the Gothic cathedrals may have been begun with the work of a single individual but soon passed far beyond that. It is important to remember that the content of

the psyche of the individual is itself social; the individual is entirely wrapped up in the culture of which he is a part, and he can no more escape from its influences than he can leave his own skin, and this is true even of the most exceptional individuals, those who are 'ahead of their times.' Art, and especially those arts which require the work of many persons, is a social enterprise; the architecture of a culture is the achievement of that culture, and even though the artistic impulse depends upon the psyche of the individual, it is within that individual that the implicit dominant ontology, which is the leading principle of the culture, operates.

Perhaps, however, we have been guilty in architecture, due to the enormity of the practical undertaking of erecting edifices, of paying more attention to the building as constructed than we have to the plans as projected. Music can be played at any time; it does not reside in the performance except as an actuality made living and vivid. But this is of interest only to the performer and appreciator; performance is an end-product, a matter of display and consumption. The musician, the composer who is the true musician, is interested chiefly in the relations between different sizes and kinds of sounds. The written score is of more concern to him. By analogy, the construction of a building is a matter of interpretation of the original blueprints; not a great work of art but an illustration; not, in one sense at least, the original itself. We need more emphasis on blueprints and less on finished buildings, if architecture is to make progress as an art. The aesthetic side of architecture is more concerned with possibilities than with useful edifices already constructed.

We end with the conclusion that for art to be useful in the occupancy sense, its usefulness in the occupancy sense alone cannot be itemized in the schedule of consideration and

importance. We should come to think of the demand for utility as a framework within which to work toward beauty, and not count on achieving beauty by the simple device of paying all our attention to utility and the strict adherence to function. If this were true for architecture, it would set that art off and apart from all the others. How could we expect form to follow function in the case of the polychrome easel painting or in that of poetry? If the principle seems absurd in these arts, is there not something necessarily wrong with its application to architecture? For to the extent to which architecture is an art, the same principles hold true of it that hold true for the other arts; since an identical aesthetic principle guides all the arts alike.

Chapter XV

MUSIC AS AN ELEMENT IN THE UNIVERSE

WHAT is music? The waltzes of Strauss, the fugues of Bach, primitive drum music, the music of the Balinese temple gongs, the wild, wailing songs of the Arabs, the latest swing—what have these in common that enables us to recognize them to be different species of the genus music? We have all heard music at various times in one form or another, and so it is likely that when the word is used it is easily understood; yet it is possible to range through enormous volumes of encyclopaedias and compendia of music without finding any suggested formal answer to the question. Of late the musicologists have obscured the issue by mixing it up with all sorts of other questions, such as those involving acoustics, the physiology of the human ear, the psychology of human appreciation, the ethnology of musical origin, and so forth. And it is frequently argued that if all of us really do understand what music is, the problem of definition is superfluous and its solution should be left to those to whom its speciousness makes particular appeal. But the definition of commonplace things, while unnecessary from the viewpoint of narrow practicality, is from

the viewpoint which seeks a deeper and wider understanding looking into the future of practicality, profoundly meaningful and even essential. The effort to understand the nature of music as an art, therefore, will have to include a definition of music. To forestall getting held up in irrelevant anterior discourse, it will have to assume boldly a definition of art. We shall, then, attempt to range between an accepted definition of art, on the one hand, since we cannot do without a theory of some sort, and actual examples of music, on the other.

Art is that kind of enterprise which consists in the deliberate apprehension of beauty. At once it is clear that there are several features of the definition which must be explained and emphasized. The definition assumes, for instance, that art is objective to and independent of the human discoverer and appreciator. Beauty, at which art aims, is understood as an element which does not rely in any way for its being upon *human* apprehension. Art as the deliberate apprehension of beauty has, therefore, an objective purpose and aim. The definition of art, which is here adopted, further assumes that the apprehension of beauty to be art must be deliberate. The sunset is not a work of art, although it contains much beauty, simply because it was not intended to exist for such a purpose (so far as we know, at least, and we must admit that the poet, who contributes a definite kind of knowledge, would not agree with this contention), but it is possible to envisage works of art which are not the products of human agency. Deliberation is not an exclusively human prerogative; it is merely a dominant human trait. We may well bear in mind that human making is not a factor which limits art to the human.

Of course, to define art in terms of beauty only puts the

problem back one step; for what is beauty? We shall have to answer this question before we are in a position to understand art. Beauty consists in the perfection of internal relations; it is the qualitative aspect of the subordination of the parts to the whole. A thing is beautiful to the extent to which it is a perfect organization, and everything is an organization to some extent else it could not hold together. Works of art are more beautiful than other objects simply because in them the degree of perfection in internal relations has reached a high peak. In art we pursue beauty as in science we pursue truth, though the beauty and the truth sought are eternal things and beyond having their being affected by whether or not they are brought into existence. To sum up, then, by substituting in our definition what we have explained each of the key terms to mean, art is that kind of enterprise which consists in the deliberate (though not necessarily merely human) apprehension of perfection in internal relations or exact subordination of parts within a whole.

Having reminded ourselves of our definition of art, we are now ready to discuss the particular variety of art which is called music. What kind of an art is music? The definition of art which we have given depends to some extent upon the art of definition, and we must follow in our definition of music the same demands for division into genus and species or whole and functional part. Music, we shall have to begin, is that art which; for music is an art, and the definition of music will have to depend upon its inclusion within the general category of art as well as upon its distinction from other arts. Music, let us say then, is that art which employs sound as its material. Once again, we shall have to indicate several special features of the definition. Sound, as the material of the art of music, delimits music in a way which

clearly distinguishes that art from other arts. No other art uses sound as its artistic material, and whatever uses sound artistically is *ipso facto* music. There is another and more important point to be noted and it is one of the points that has already been indicated in the effort to elucidate the definition of art, but this time stated physiologically rather than psychologically. This is that sound and not ears specifies music. Ears, and perhaps more narrowly, human ears, are prerequisites for the appreciation of music at the present stage of development. It would be folly indeed to assert for example that absolute pitch exists only for those who have the sense of absolute pitch. But the presence of ears to interrupt the sound waves and to record them is obviously not essential for the existence of the waves themselves. In music we are dealing with combinations of sound waves, and combinations of sound waves could be products of chance as well as of design, given a sufficient number of instances requiring a sufficiently long run of time. We are not dealing with the appreciation or the enjoyment of those combinations of sound waves except in quite another connection. Conceivably, if music were to be played by a deaf man with no one present to hear, the music would be music just the same. It would simply fail to be appreciated as such; but the failure of appreciation would not imply the failure of music. It would simply imply the lack of the occupancy of the proper perspective for appreciation.

Our definition and its comment has deprived music of its primitive personal status and assigned it an ontological one. Music involves certain objective and independent relations between physical elements, namely sound waves, which are as universally extant, even when not existent, as any other general component. The whole is not reducible to the sum

of its parts but emerges as an organization at a higher level with qualities characteristic of that level. The combinations of sounds which we have come to regard as music are not limited to the physical level by the fact that they are sounds. For the particular combinations which have been thus far chosen are not merely sounds; they are *musical* sounds. Sound becomes music when it is organized in such a way that its organization reaches a high degree of perfection made possible by the efficient articulation of parts within the whole. A musical sound, *i.e.*, a particular combination of sounds having the component quality of beauty, has an ontological status of its own, a being, as an element in the universe, involving as necessary to that purpose only itself. Naturally, ontological beings have relations with other beings; as ontological beings, in fact, they may have, besides ontological relations, relations which are epistemological, psychological, ethical, etc. But these relations depend upon the ontological, and the ontological, as ultimately prior, do not depend upon any other. Indeed it would be difficult to see how any elements which did not enjoy a relative status of ontological independence could have relations with other elements. Only that which is at least quasi-separated can have bona-fide relations.

There is a sense in which the value of a thing is dependent upon its worth to other things, and this is its extrinsic value. But there is also a sense in which the value of a thing is independent of other things, and this is its intrinsic value. The intrinsic value of a thing is its value in and by itself, quite regardless of other things and of their capacity for appreciation. Sunlight issues from the extremely hot gases near the surface of the sun, and it is of benefit to all forms of life on the earth. But surely no one will be willing to

contend that sunlight is not something in itself irrespective of its point of origin, its place of destination, or its value or disvalue to either heavenly body. Sunlight obviously consists in certain photons organized in a certain way and traveling (or waving) at a certain rate of speed; it has a certain temperature and pressure on a given set of scales; etc. And as it has organized properties of a quantitative nature, so it has qualities which are equally independent of everything outside and are fully available to a given perspective. The cosmical status of an object is characterized chiefly by its intrinsic relations, and we may suppose that a musical composition, denoting a specific combination of musical relations, has its own ontological place in the universe. The freedom of intrinsic value endows music in its ontological aspect with the same world prerogatives as are enjoyed by the Companion of Sirius.

We have implied that not all combinations of sounds constitute music, a fact which seems so obvious as to require no discussion. The sounds which emerge from a railway station usually are not music, those which emerge from a concert hall usually are. The question of what distinguishes those combinations of sound which have the quality of beauty from those which do not is a difficult one, and involves a prior understanding of the nature of beauty. Elsewhere beauty has been defined as the election of parts for whole, the harmony of an organization involved in the perfect relation of parts within a whole. Those combinations of sounds, then, which have a perfect organization by means of a harmonic relation of parts within the whole are beautiful sounds. The relation between harmony in the sense employed here and harmony in musical composition will lead us further afield. It will concern the relation of music to mathematics.

Harmony is of course a quantitative as well as a qualitative relation. It may be considered here to be that right relation between tones which depends upon the due proportionality of a succession of chordal elements. That this relation is mathematical has never been disputed, except by those like Euler who wished to place a psychological interpretation upon harmony. But even Euler's interpretation only disguised the problem by removing it from mathematics, since in claiming that the mind takes delight in the discovery of law and order he admitted that there is an objective law and order in which the mind can take delight, and it is this law and order, reigning among musical sounds, of which harmony attempts to reveal the mathematical relation. Helmholtz's theory of the consonance and dissonance of musical beats seems more tenable. But the fundamental fact of harmony cannot be allowed to rely upon a theory which is psychological, physical, or indeed anything except musical. The theory of harmony must depend primarily upon the fact that there appear to be good, internal, musical reasons for preferring the sound of some notes together. Why this is true assumes a more profound analysis of the problem.

In European music, certain preferred systems of harmony have prevailed. From Purcell and Corelli to Liszt and Wagner, the major and minor scales and the system based upon the Triad of the tone with its third and fifth have ruled. This is not true of oriental music, however, and it will not necessarily continue to be true in European music. Scriabin used a synthetic scale, and Schoenberg has attempted the twelve-tone, Dodecuple Scale. Despite the neo-classical revival of Stravinsky's "back to Bach" movement, it is likely that others will be tried. The octave has been in all Western music the basic harmonic interval. Which harmonic system

is the fundamental one, or is there no fundamental system, the whole topic being an arbitrary affair? The two questions assume the usual disjunctive trap that occurs when alternatives present themselves as exhaustive. The answer must be quantitative rather than crudely qualitative.

There has been discovered no absolute system of harmony in terms of which all other systems must be regarded as dissonant. The sense of concord depends upon perspective, and the perspective of every appreciator of music is determined by the given frame of reference of his culture. Given the culture, the frame of reference is determined; and given the frame, the perspective is absolute. Thus arbitrariness is reconciled with absoluteness in a system of relativity-relationality. There remains to be discoverd a common denominator among all known systems of harmony, primitive as well as civilized, Eastern as well as Western, a sort of tensor calculus of harmony, which will reveal the true elements of invariance and thus make us more cognizant of the underlying nature of music.

Although the psychological aspects of art are anything but to the point here, we may permit ourselves a brief excursion into the realm of taste, in connection with the discussion of the changing systems of harmony. Why is it that the discord of one generation, as exhibited by the innovators in musical fashions, the pioneers and adventurers of the musical world, can become an integral part of the concord of the next? Does the appreciation of the generations follow a progression which is unfaltering, or does it pursue a dialectical course so that it loses what it had when it gains what it did not have? Taste is a matter of judgment of good or bad based upon what we are able to feel. And feeling in turn is educated by prior rationality: we feel what we have been educated

to believe, what we have become used to, so that while feeling is the final criterion, it rests upon reason. We love only what we can understand, and the feelings implied by taste are undercut by the appreciation which relies upon some sort of knowledge. Thus the psychology of music contributes little to the understanding of music, whereas the understanding of music throws considerable light upon the problems which arise in the field of the psychology of music. This is in line with the fact that ontology contributes more to the understanding of psychology than the reverse. Taste is no more arbitrary than the values selected by taste for approval can be said to be arbitrary. Only a certain range of values is available to the selectivity of taste, and these values are confined to what has been accepted and what is proposed for acceptance, *e.g.*, the music of Beethoven and Brahms in the first instance and of Hindemith and Bartok in the second. The judgment of taste within this range is narrowed by the cultural outlook of the individual within his own culture: by whether he tends to be conservative or progressive. This is the social environment; but the individual also lives in what we may describe as his individual or personal environment: he has a certain constitution and personality which demark him from his fellowmen to some extent, and this personality and coloring further determine what his taste shall be and hence which music he shall select for approval and which he shall reject. The taste of the individual is thus determined in two ways, both of which are independent of him; by what is available to taste, and by what the social and personal environment determine him to prefer. Besides this determination, there may be some extremely narrow range of pure arbitrariness: what strikes him at a particular moment and location and in a particular mood (which may last only

for a matter of seconds) as favorable and pleasant and what as not.

The taste of the individual, as made up by his social and personal environment, constitutes what we call his perspective. The musical perspective of an individual, or even for that matter of a whole generation, is that point of view from which musical values are apprehended. Perspectives are a combination of feelings and the anterior rationality on which such feelings are based. Perspectives can be widened; they can be widened more easily by young individuals whose determinations do not yet weigh too heavily upon them than by older ones who are fairly fixed in their frames. The question of what is a concord and what a discord is not an arbitrary one but depends upon perspectives. Perspectives do widen in time; we today can appreciate the music of Palestrina as well as later music which Palestrina would have probably deemed uncomfortably discordant. We do not any longer shrink at ineffective progressions, and we are almost prepared to find a certain kind of legitimate place for fundamental discords of the ninth, eleventh and thirteenth. We have learned that the effects of open harmony can be heightened by the contrast with planned discords. The fact is that the chord can be regarded both as an independent entity having its own justification as a whole, on the one hand, and as a dependent entity in a series of more closely related chords in which it is only a part, on the other. The wider our musical horizons the more we are prepared to accept through a perspective that insists only upon the musical properties of tonal relations and not upon rigid harmonic rules which have been erected upon the screening tests provided by the standard perspective of a given date and place, say, the early nineteenth century in Central Europe.

Progress in music, or merely the invention of new music without the notion of progress, has the incidental benefit, therefore, that it increases the width of the perspective of the individual appreciator. In recent years we have supposed that all such advantage was to be gained merely from those who experimented with musical forms: new scales, new instruments, and so on. But it is as possible to be fooled in this direction as in any other. Those of us who in the nineteen twenties in Paris gave ear to the compositions of George Antheil thought we were witnessing the birth of something important, and not until some years later when Antheil tried to write in the accepted modes did we discover how very unoriginal and derivative his work is. Bach, to take an example from the other extreme, was a conservative artist who merely gave power and perfection to the general plan which had already been laid out for him by his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. Probably the improvement of the human perspective by means of music is not the exclusive prerogative of any one school or type of music. But it does go and it has gone on, and its future possibilities are enormous.

The art of music, like that of the theatre, depends upon an intermediate performance to put the appreciator in touch with the work of art. It is true that symphonic scores may be read by the proficient amateur, but the playing of symphonic scores requires a symphony orchestra and a conductor which together make it possible for the appreciator to hear the symphony. Thus there has grown up a considerable body of estimation devoted largely to performers of music, as opposed to composers, an adjunct for which there is no need in so many other arts where the appreciator can go straight to the original composition with no feeling of inadequacy:

literature (except the drama), the plastic arts. Those who place a premium upon interpretation would argue that the performer is an artist, and that the interpretive artist may be as great as the 'creative' artist. Certainly in these days the interpreters receive the major part of the credit as well as the cash from all but the discriminating few who understand the nature of the difference. Even crude statistics ought to tell us how much more exceptional, and therefore individually how much more valuable, the creative artist is. There are hundreds of adequate, if not brilliant, conductors of Beethoven's music for every Beethoven; and in every generation there seem to be even a few brilliant conductors, but composers of the eminence of Beethoven do not occur in every generation and occur indeed in hardly any. There is something extremely difficult to accept in the spectacle of an audience applauding and a conductor acknowledging the applause for the playing of a symphony by Mozart who himself in his most productive years found life heavy going. The contemporary conductor, of course, gives us our pleasure now, whereas in most cases the contemporary composer only promises something for the future, a future which may belong more to the next audiences than to our own. But it is still the composer who deserves and does not receive the bulk of the gratitude of the lovers of music, for without them there would be no need for conductors or symphony orchestras, or even, for that matter, appreciative audiences.

In music, as in all other pure arts, the ivory tower, far from being scorned, should be regarded as a social investment. There must be progress in music as in everything else in human culture. The sense of hearing must make its advances, too; and from whom else if not from the composer are we to learn what we ought to be able to hear? The extent of

our estimation of the artist in the abstract is one measure of our attainment of culture. When we listen to music, we should bear in mind that however proficient the performers may be, it is not primarily them to whom we are listening but the fellow artists who are the logical if not the chronological contemporaries of those creative artists who must dwell largely unrecognized in the present. Human culture is a vast undertaking, one that cannot be touched at more than one point at a time. If there is a hierarchy of value among the arts, we have not yet discovered it. Therefore in any art, in music for instance, we come to the core of the problem. Music is an element in the universe, having its own ontological status.

Can it be possible that in setting aesthetic forces in motion we may be initiating a process of which the end lies beyond our knowledge? Are we to assume that the heavenly voices heard in all the greatest of the works of art are stilled once there are no more human senses to catch the vibrations? The first question leads to vast and unbelievable conjecture; we ought to be able to admit at once that it is easier to start any process than it is to follow it through to its ultimate implications and ramifications. Certainly in the case of human children, ignorance of ends prevails; and works of art are children, too. The second question presents no less difficulty than the first, for a positive answer would require a gigantic human egotism which we should be too intelligent as well as too humble to possess, while a negative answer would presume more knowledge than we have.

So much for the larger meaning of the relation of music to culture. The institution of music in a more particular way can be considered one among a number of other institutions in the organization of human culture. The function of the

institution of music is to heighten the meaning and intensify the functioning of the symbolism of other institutions. Music lends perfection and completion to other enterprises. These latter range all the way from the incidental music of the theatre to the illustration of life itself as exemplified in any audition of street music, where the casualness of the passer-by is dramatized as part of an essential feature of the human predicament. Music may occupy the foreground, where it becomes recognized as an end, or the background where it features whatever is in the foreground: religious ceremonies, sexual dances, the pomp and circumstance of political functions, and many other activities.

Thus there has got to be a place within the realm of music for all points of view with respect to the function of music inasmuch as music has more than one function. Music needs art-for-art's-sake at one extreme, and Bert Brecht's *gebrauchsmusik*, so carefully tended by Hindemith and Křenek, at the other. There is no music that does not exist for music's sake and none that does not have a social context, even though the complexities of the former may exceed the blatancies of the latter. In the last analysis, it is not the theories of the composers that we are after (except in so far as composers are theorists rather than composers) but their music. And the music of the composers does not necessarily follow faithfully, or reflect abjectly, the theories they hold. Were it not human to maintain one theory and practice another, the actions of human beings would betray more consistency than they do.

The controversy between art-for-art's-sake and *gebrauchsmusik* is not unrelated to the rival claims of absolute or abstract and program music. In mathematics it is not expected that the symbols shall stand by themselves, and so accom-

panying every set of equations there is always an explanatory text. In music the idea of a text in intelligible language accompanying the score, ever since Liszt gave this as a definition of 'program' music, has struck lovers of music as obscuring the sheerly musical qualities of otherwise pure music; and so they profess to prefer music that is absolute or abstract, that is, music which depends upon the interna relations of sound and not upon external relations which it may have to extraneous, literary ideas. Thus far in music absolute music (abstract is probably the more accurate term) has had the advantage of program music. Bach's fugues certainly do seem to be superior to Richard Strauss' tone poems and even superior to Beethoven's pastoral *Sixth Symphony* Yet it is unlikely that the one can ever supplant the other The mathematical development of music probably lies in the direction of absolute music; but illustrative music will probably never die, at least not so long as adjuncts to actua events are required as much as they are now.

We may now sum up the argument. Art is that kind of enterprise which consists in the deliberate apprehension of beauty. But since deliberation is not an human prerogative art is not exclusively human. Beauty consists in the perfection of internal relations of organization, qualitative expression given out by the proper subordination of parts within the whole. Music is that art which employs sound as its material Musical sounds, *i.e.*, sounds artistically organized, may be considered extrinsically as being of value to a certain set o perspectives in which they can be appreciated, and intrinsically as being of value to themselves. The intrinsic value o musical sounds colors their ontological status, for it is a ontological independents that they are capable of having relations with other items in the universe. The ontologica

nature of music as an element in the universe is the aspect which is most important and upon which all other aspects depend. Not all sounds are musical sounds; those which are musical are characterized by harmony. Harmony, or concord, and discord are relative notions; they are relative to the perspectives which are determined by the cultural conditions of a given date and place. But they are not absolutely relative, since, given the cultural perspective they must be absolute. Thus instead of absolute relatives we might better describe them as relative absolutes. Harmony is a changing affair, and there is no accepted system of harmony which is considered to be the true one. As discords are taken into the system of harmony by means of their internal justification in musical compositions, the social perspective widens to include them. Taste, then, is a matter of the social perspective. Thus the psychology of music may be seen to be a branch of psychology and not the leading topic in musical theory. Individual taste is determined by the social perspective and also by the personal perspective, but there is always left over a marginal quantity of pure arbitrariness and chance. Progress in music therefore widens the perspective and increases the horizon of the members of a culture. This progress may be a revolution in musical form (*e.g.*, Schoenberg) or an intensification of musical content and the perfection of old forms (*e.g.*, J. S. Bach).

Music is a difficult art, one requiring that an interpreter come between composer and appreciator. In recent years the composer had suffered in favor of the attention paid to interpreters; but great composers are rarer than good interpreters, and should be helped more than they have been. Thus we must come to regard the ivory tower not as a liability but rather as a social investment promising rewards

of dividends in the future. Aesthetic forces, such as those evident in the art of music, are easier to set in motion than to follow to their ultimate destination. The music of art must mean more than the sum of the impressions it makes upon the vibrating membrane of the ear. As an institution in human society, music heightens the meaning and intensifies the functioning of other institutions. Thus we have need for music built upon the pattern set by the theory of art-for-art's-sake as well as for the practical musical results brought about by the theory of *gebrauchsmusik*. The heights possible in the music of the future probably lie with absolute music, which is certainly the greatest kind of music; but on the other hand it is unlikely that program music will ever be entirely discarded.

Chapter XVI

THE BASICITY OF THE PLASTIC ARTS

PHILOSOPHY and art are broad terms, broadly defined; both are true, yet the philosophy of art is in some danger of remaining impracticable unless the field can be given more concrete specification. The task does not seem to be a hopeless one. If there is validity to the philosophy of art, then there must be special relationships between branches of philosophy and particular arts capable of throwing light upon the arts and of giving content to the philosophy. At least one such relationship is detectable. It consists in the illustrative value which the plastic arts have for that department of philosophy which is called phenomenology, and of the meaning which phenomenology imparts to the plastic arts.

Phenomenology may be defined briefly as the theory of appearances, the study of actual things just as they present themselves to the perceptions or as they compel the senses to attend to them. Hence phenomenology, which attempts no value judgments, is akin to ontology, the theory of being. It is distinct from epistemology, which is the study of knowledge. Phenomenology, like most other philosophical terms,

has at some time or other lent itself to diametrically opposed interpretations. Thus for Hegel and Husserl the term meant thinking without an object, the descriptive analysis of the subjective processes, while for Peirce it meant the indecomposable element of the "phaneron." In order to distinguish the objective conception from the classically subjective one, Peirce proposed to name his version "phaneroscopy." Perhaps it would be a better term to employ here, since this is the version which has empirical applicability to the plastic arts. The phrase, plastic arts, here is intended to refer particularly to painting and sculpture and their allied techniques. Plastic is defined as capable of receiving form or of being molded. When dealing with the relationship between phenomenology and the plastic arts, we shall not be developing the arts except on their theoretical and interpretive side. The interpretation of art is an ancient pursuit but the practical applications of phenomenology are not so very old.

The plastic arts deal with the perceptual aspects of the actual world, with the ontological facets of phenomena. Each of the arts occupies itself with a certain phase of the sheer surface of existence. This surface reveals more profound meaning and significance than it was thought to contain Easel painting deals with color and with three-dimensional shapes made of colors but projected upon a two-dimensional screen. It deals, in other words, primarily with quality as such. Sculpture deals with three-dimensional masses, that is with forms as such. Each gains something that the other lacks and each leaves out something. Painting lacks the third dimension, except as suggested in the subject-matter of its canvases and in the thickness of its pigments. Distance, for instance, or depth of focus, may be suggested by drawing

objects in the foreground larger than those in the background, although of course the painting itself be but a thin spread of linseed oil and pigment upon a two-dimensional stretched linen canvas. Sculpture lacks color, except as suggested by the lights and shadows cast by its forms. Some sculpture in the past has been colored, but sculpture inherently does not seem to depend upon color but upon form. Essentially, painting appeals to the visual sense and sculpture to the sense of touch or to the combined senses of vision and touch. The appreciator of painting is content in most cases to look at it; the appreciator of sculpture looks at it, too. but he also wishes to run his hands over it and feel it.

What can the raw data of the perceptual aspects of the actual world reveal concerning more fundamental and widely implicative value? That is the question which the plastic arts ask and the artists attempt in some wise to answer. No two artists, however close, ever see the world exactly alike, no matter how similar their training and experiences may have been or how identical the scenes which they endeavor to employ. The difference in artistic style is a matter of the perspective from which the appearances are recorded and interpreted. The responses made by the artists to their stimuli both actual and potential are practically innumerable. Some are made in terms of the method of the art and some in terms of its content.

The fashionable tendency today is to lean upon method, particularly the method of extreme abstraction, of which Picasso is the high priest. The emphasis upon method is in some ways a gain and in some ways a loss. It is a loss in that it substitutes means for ends. Obviously the method of painting as of anything else is a method of accomplishing some-

thing. To lean upon method to such a degree is to overlook what the method is intended to accomplish, or in other words to substitute the method for the something to be achieved by the method. But it is a gain in that it is likely to mark an advance, so that the next time that something is to be accomplished by the method, there will be a better method with which to accomplish it. The history of art pursues a dialectic course, just as the history of everything else except science does, and the history of science does, too, except that the dialectic of science is of a different and more direct sort.

Now it so happens that the emphasis of the day is upon method and upon one aspect of method only, and it is a more subtle aspect than would first appear. For the modern artist is not so entranced with new materials or with new methods in a physical sense; he does not particularly care about using new paints and varnishes or new types of material for his canvas or new surfaces to be substituted for the old materials. He is more preoccupied with the problem of discovering new and more significant methods of employing the old materials. In what way, he asks, can the old materials be used so that they represent the raw data of the perceptual world in a more significant manner? Why, obviously, the answer comes, by leaving out unimportant details of the surface of the actual world and by pointing up the few but significant details that remain. What is more fundamental and widely implicative than the *suggested* form of actual objects, once we have stripped them of their insignificant details and borne down on the elementary form which remains?

The answer to the question given by the ancient Greeks was somewhat different, and we are apt today to overlook its meaning. Unfortunately, little of the Greek painting re-

mains and the color has been worn off most of the sculpture; yet the sculpture remains to tell us its story. And the story of classic Greek sculpture is predominantly one of pictorial and representative art, of content, that is, rather than of method, though of course this is not the whole story. Those of us who have been raised under the aegis of the emphasis on method tend to identify representation with exact reproduction. The artist who puts content on a par with or even before method is one we may regard as the competitor of the camera. Even those of us who understand the essentially abstractive nature of the camera, which in its present stage of development chooses to depict only certain aspects of the actual visual world, consider that as the mechanism is improved its ability to represent will improve correspondingly, so that the day will come when the camera will reproduce not what we see—for its ability will far exceed anything encompassed by the defective and prejudiced human eye—but what is actually *there* in all its profusion of detail. This is entirely likely. But it will have no effect whatsoever upon representative art. For representative art is anything but exact reproduction, nor is that even its aim. In order to understand representative art at its best, we must remember that while abstractive art must retain a minimum of representation to be meaningful at all, representative art also has its corresponding requirement, which is to retain a minimum of abstraction, without which it would not be art.

The difference between the ways in which the Greek artist and the modern artist see the world is a subtle one; and it finally consists in a difference between what is abstracted and what is abandoned. The end of art, of course, is always the same. The Greek artist evidently felt that significant representation could only be gained through

subtle exaggeration, and an exaggeration of any kind involves a certain amount of distortion of proportions. But while the modern artist is changing proportions also, he is doing so in terms of an emphasis on method, while the Greek changed it in terms of an emphasis on content. The Greek was seeking an essential kind of representation of his subject-matter that could only be gained through an exaggeration of proportions. Quite evidently, however, the Greek artist did not consider himself as abstracting from the actual world but rather as making up somewhat, or attempting to make up, for the *defects* of the actual world. How ought this actual object, which is beautiful, to exist? By altering such and such and improving such and such, it could possibly be made more beautiful. What-exists can be made into what-ought-to-exist through the representation of an improvement of what-exists. The characteristic of Greek art is its perfection. The Greek did not seek to limit his art to the portrayal of actual events, any more than the modern artist does, but sought in actual events for a way in which they could be brought up to the level of perfection which he envisaged in his imagination—which, in short, he could make archetypal. Such was the method and the aim of the Greek artist. The modern artist, despite his respect for what-actually-exists, a respect acquired from empirical science, has no genuine respect for content. For the modern artist the empirical object is an occasion, not a cause; he is not after its essence but after the essence of the method which attention to it suggests. It is important to recall at this point, however, that the Greek artists and the modern artists are primarily and equally artists in that both are equally concerned with the artistic problem of the plastic arts, which is that of how to get at the more fundamental

value implied by the raw data of the perceptual aspects of the actual world.

The plastic arts, more than music, speak with a universal tongue. Music is a cultural affair strictly, and knows cultural escarpments, so that from one culture to another there is lack of reach of understanding. We do not seem able to grasp the full meaning of Chinese music, for example, while we do comprehend Chinese painting fairly well. The appeal of the plastic arts, then, is even broader than that of music. Of course, all of the arts employ a common method, namely the artistic method; so that to some extent the barriers which make one art less universal in its appeal than another is due to mechanical and superficial difficulties rather than to any very profound differences. Literature, in some ways the greatest of the arts, has the cultural barrier of language, a barrier which is often largely (though never altogether) surmounted by means of translation. But in the plastic arts it seems to so happen that no artificial barriers, no cultural escarpments, have any effect. We understand and appreciate Chinese painting, Egyptian sculpture, and French tapestry in much the same way in which we know and love primitive African wood carvings.

The universality of appeal of the plastic arts may be due to their primary phenomenological property. Of course, any direct sensual appeal on the part of an aspect of the actual world considered ontologically, involves the phenomenological field. But just as in sense experience vision enjoys a priority based on its superior type of perception, its complication and intensity, so the arts which appeal to vision make an appeal which in this sense (even if in this sense only) transcends that of the other arts. The plastic arts reveal the ontological depth of surfaces. Existence, like all other being,

is everywhere dense; and the phenomenological surfaces of qualitative color and three-dimensional form are no exception to this density. Whatever our senses of vision or of touch reveal to us, whether it be sheer color or sheer form or both, is infinitely meaningful. Surface, by definition, is that which has the least amount of depth; yet it has an existence which, *qua* existence, is the equal of any. The plastic arts are continually asserting that this surface has a meaning which consists in innumerable axiological properties.

For greater clarity and illustration, let us consider in particular one of the plastic arts only, and we shall choose for this purpose the art of polychrome easel painting in oils. Painting is a study of what the philosophers call the phenomena, the sheer appearances of things taken just as they appear. This makes of it, in one aspect at least, a branch of applied phenomenology. But how does painting utilize the phenomena in art, by what useful means and after what fashion? The means by which the painter grasps the phenomena may be subdivided into those of his materials, his subject-matter, his method, and his own personal perspective or philosophy of approach. The last classification is in many ways the most important, but before we come to consider it we must devote a few words to each of the others. Let us pause, then, in our analysis in order to consider the painter's problems, his means and also his limitations.

The painter has first of all to deal with his materials. Here there is a wide choice. He may choose canvases which are small or large, made of hemp, flax or cotton; he may prepare grounds for them of glue, chalk, gypsum, kaolin, or some other similarly suitable material; his pigments may be organic or synthetic; and he may apply them with brushes which are thick or thin, coarse or fine, made of pig's bristles, cow's or

camel's hair, or red sable, or with palette knife, tube or finger. Slightly different materials are capable of yielding wide differences in impressions. Line drawing imposes on the draughtsman a great selectivity, an abstraction of form. Oil painting gives the painter a richness and a wide variety. It is here a question of what sort of limitations the artist wishes to impose arbitrarily upon himself. The materials aid or hinder him in accordance with whether he wishes to undertake a large or a small program.

The painter has next to deal with his subject-matter. Here he is at the mercy of his favorites: what values in the world appeal to him and how strongly or in what order. Among the current favorites are: landscapes; nudes of the human figure; portraits; and still lifes of fruit, vegetables and tableware, such as vases, and tablecloths. But there have been others in the past: scenes of human activities, of animals and of historic social events. And presumably there will be still others in the future. The subject-matter—object-matter would be a better term—is evidently selected for him, or perhaps we might say selects him, in accordance with what he prefers; for he is at the mercy of his preferences to a certain extent, and these are largely determined for him by his environment both physical and cultural.

Finally, the painter has to deal with his method. He has many ways to choose from, as for example alla prima painting, tonal painting, contrasted color painting, or painting with preliminary charcoal sketch and under-and over-painting in successive layers. He may employ painting media of turpentine, plant oils, varnishes, waxes, or all together. He may wish to enhance the final effect with glazes both transparent and opaquely colored and with varnishes. Method, too, is determined by the painter's perspective on the world,

which in turn is determined by his world-view and his cosmological beliefs, which in turn have been determined by what he has come deep down to hold true, as informed by what he has learned as a child and as an adult and by what he has thought about and accepted, and by what his ideals are. The method of painting may run all the way from an approach to absolute abstraction to one of pure, 'realistic' reproduction, passing on the way the representational method of symbolism.

The accomplishment of the painter is determined by all of the above factors in conjunction with his own personal power as an artist, a combination of talent plus training and equipment. To ask how great a painter an artist is means to ask how much aesthetic power and energy he has. The aesthetic power consists in the ability to grasp the perfection of relations of parts to the whole in any actual thing. This, of course, involves the imagination, since no actual thing is perfect. Everything that exists in the human being exists in the world first, and the artist is no exception to this statement. Hence what the artist perceives is an element of the world, and in his particular case it is a high axiological element, for the perception of which a keen faculty is required.

Such, then, is the approach and such are the problems of the painter. These are easy to ascertain from the outside. All of us, whether or not we are painters, are capable of understanding something of the painter's problems, his methods and ambitions. Further than that the explanation becomes more and more difficult. There is in the last analysis no substitute for personal experience in the plastic arts. Certainly first-hand experience aids understanding as well as appreciation. We learn intimately through practice what the artist's difficulties are. We also learn to view the world

from inside him. This is a rare privilege. The philosopher is apt to forget, just as the layman is apt never to have known, the intensity of appearances, the terrific and terrible concentration of surfaces, suggested to us in the work of the great painters. For the painter, the surfaces of things literally come alive and quiver with excitement, growing so vivid as to be almost unbearable. Suddenly, we find ourselves in a colored, three-dimensional world which in its phenomenal aspects we had formerly taken almost completely for granted, even ignored. The art of painting allows this world, this near world which had yet been so far away, to impinge upon us in all its glory. Art is essentially affirmative, and to affirm surfaces is somehow to affirm all. For if the most superficial of things can have a profound meaning, what meaning, what enormous and magnificent depths of meaning, must the more profound things have! This is the story that painting, and the plastic arts in general, have to tell us. It is an exciting story, of interest to every living person because it tells us so much that is new about the world in which we live, so much that we had overlooked but that becomes heightened by experience. It is a story, moreover, which we can ignore only at the cost of sacrificing something of life itself, something cut short in our very existence.

The aspect of art in the description just given is one that every uninstructed person can share. But it does not exhaust the meaning of art, it only approaches the limits of the difficulty of appreciation. For art, and painting especially, is more difficult than that. Thus far, we have been describing the relation of the artist to the actual world, to what is at the moment existing. But since painting is after all an art, it does not stop there. Art is never satisfied with mere reporting or mere technique, despite the aims of the so-called

realistic school. Mere appearances do not satisfy the artist; he wishes not only to record what appears but through what appears to study what ought to appear. Painting indeed might best be described as the symbolic representation in a two-dimensional plastic medium of what ought to appear. Sculpture is the same, but in a three-dimensional medium. Honest painting means, it is true, painting what one sees, not what one ought to be seeing. But perception changes. It changes, moreover, in a well-established if not well-recognized order. The temporal order of the change of perception runs: (1) painting what one sees, (2) painting what is actually there, (3) painting what ought to be there. The basic assumption of this series is of course that all three involve honest and sincere 'seeing' by the painter. Let us give a few words to each of these stages.

(1) To paint what one sees is to paint naively. Painting at all is no easy task. But to the man who has learned how to paint, so far as the technical side of painting goes, the difficulty still remains of having to paint exactly what he sees and not what he thinks he sees. What he thinks he sees can be dictated by any number of what are in this connection irrelevant and obtruding factors. He may paint what he knows as a matter of fact or record to be there. Or, more commonly, he may paint what others who have painted well have taught him to think is there. Great painting is literally a vision, and new painting is a new vision; we all see through the eyes of the great painters of the past to some extent, whether we happen to be painters or not. Contemporary professional painters who have not reached a style which is peculiarly their own fall into a habit of seeing which is heavily influenced by past masters of the art. This is the inevitable way of the beginner; it is a step that must be

taken but presumably one that must also be left behind by any man who wishes to establish himself as a painter in his own right. The first stage in breaking away from imitation, then, is to paint what one sees, directly and naively.

But of course to paint what one sees does not necessarily mean to paint what is actually there. The painter who paints what *he* sees is never a man with perfect and infallible eyes. What he sees may be and usually is to some extent at least what nobody else sees. The circle of his vision corresponds somewhat with what others see, but such circles of vision are not concentric circles; he does not ever see exactly or altogether what others see. Consequently, from the point of view of faithful factual representation he makes mistakes. But the 'mistakes' may not be wrong as painting. The degree to which a man who paints exactly what he sees produces a work of art is proportional to the degree to which he is a painter. The point is something of a truism. To some small extent, anyone can paint what he sees, but only to some small extent: the comparison stops there. It is not easy to be a painter even at the naïve level.

The painter of this first degree is certainly naïve. He is not trying to paint what ought to be there, for he actually thinks that what he sees *is* there. He is not hypocritical, nor is he trying to deceive himself. Indeed a terrific amount of honesty is required to be a painter even of the first degree. The data of visual perception do not long remain pure, if indeed they ever were in that state. They get mixed very soon with elements of cognition, with conceptions in terms of which indeed the original sense perceptions were made possible. The fact may be unhesitatingly stated that absolute faithfulness to what is seen is almost impossible. A constant struggle is required, together with a large amount of training,

in order to separate out or to keep separated what *is* seen from what conceptions dictate must have been seen. For what the artist remembers is bound to interpose itself between what he has seen and his attempts to reproduce that perception in his painting.

(2) In discussing the problem of painting what one sees, some remarks have already been made concerning the problem of painting what is actually there. To paint what is actually there in a perfect way, to reproduce any segment of the field which is available to visual perception, would require a sensory equipment which functioned automatically and without any interference. It would require a mind capable of transforming and transmitting nerve impulses from the eye to the hand without altering them in the slightest. Such a mind, of course, does not exist. Interpretation invariably exists, just as perspectives exist; and they vary from individual to individual. No two persons, and certainly no two painters, will ever agree about what is actually 'there.' If they could agree about form, then they would disagree about color, and vice versa. Extreme subjectivists will argue that nothing constant is 'there,' and that it is the perception of what is there which determines it to be there. Extreme subjectivism, therefore, fully supports the contention of this second point. But it is being made here rather from the position that everything, including values, has an objective existence. The ability of the painter, as of all human beings, to determine what objective existence is in any given case, is always limited. And when we come to the question of what that objective existence *means* in any given case, the problem is heightened. For the meaning of any actual thing, whether it be a woman's face, an open field, or an apple, presents disheartening difficulties to the painter of the second degree.

Things are not only not what they seem, in the vulgar sense; they do not even look like what they seem, as the painter discovers when he comes to inspect them very closely.

No one has ever paid sufficient attention to the problem of determining what truly is 'there.' The actual world is in a constant state of flux, nothing actual remains the same for any length of time; and hence the problem of determining what is there is aggravated by the fact that what is there does not remain what it is but changes and alters into something else. If this is true of everything in actuality, as it assuredly is, then the problem of the visual artist of this second degree becomes a very acute one. For the objects of visual perception are transformed while we look at them. In the very act of determining what they are, 'what they are' becomes 'what they were.' Lights pass over a woman's face, which is a mobile affair in the first place, never still, always changing in terms of what the owner of the face is thinking, what emotions are taking possession of her. The lights and shadows alter the contours, and the face as a whole is in motion, however still the sitter for a portrait, say, may attempt to remain. The point probably is that nothing can be said to be 'there' in any constant way, in a world where flux is the rule.

Thus the problem of becoming a painter of the second degree, of endeavoring to paint what is there, must meet and defeat two insuperable obstacles, one subjective and the other objective. In the first place he lacks an instrument for exact reproduction, and can only limit himself to what is 'there' qualified to some extent by his own preconceptions, prejudices and involuntary interpretations. In the second place he lacks an object which is continuously 'there' and uninterruptedly available for visual perception.

(3) The ambition to paint what ought to be there is the true ambition of the great professional painter. The determination of what ought to be there depends, of course, upon a great many other things. It depends upon the ability to a large extent to paint what one sees. It depends upon the ability to a large extent to paint what is actually there. It depends upon the ability to a large extent to combine these abilities in a third, namely the determination of the ideal in any given case. The great painter, he who paints successfully something approaching what ought to be there, is not merely an impulsive synthesizer, for the artistic act is no more aggregate compromise; it is a true organization and as such it has managed to sublate its elements as parts of a whole. The ideal which the painter is copying exists before he copies it only in his mind's eye, in his ability to conceive how things ought to be. But the fact that the ideal exists for the moment only in conception does not mean that it has its being limited to the mind. An ideal is held by the mind and is for the moment nowhere else actual; but its being is independent of the mind and indeed of all actuality. The great painter, whatever may be his explicitly held philosophy, is a metaphysical realist in that he assumes the being of an independent set of values which he forever seeks. Such ideal values together with their relations have their being as possibilities. They are, of course, suggested to the painter by what exists. They are suggested by what is actually 'there' in the actual world, and they are further suggested by what the painter actually 'sees.' In both cases, if the painter is a great painter, the fragmentary parts suggest the whole of which they are parts. But the parts, however fragmentary, are true and real parts; and thus the painter is a phenomenologist in the practice of his art, for he takes seriously

what appears to him and reads through it the determination of what ought to appear.

The classic objection to this position in metaphysics will probably be raised here. Who is to decide what ought to appear? If each decision is based upon the prejudices of the individual making the decision, then the ideal of what ought to be there is a private and subjective one; ideal would, then, mean personal. There are several answers which can be made to this contention. To begin with, the subjectivist position is eventually unassailable. Subjective idealism, sometimes called solipsism, is irrefutable; the only trouble with it is that nobody really accepts it. None really and truly believes that he is the sole creator of the entire world in which he lives and has his being. The fact that nobody believes it, though some pretend to themselves that they do, does not mean that it is not valid. Validity is not a matter of belief; but nobody has yet demonstrated its truth. Until such a demonstration is made and belief follows, we shall have to deny its claims.

Another answer to the position of subjectivism with respect to the ideal is that if the ideal is subjectively determined in every case, in terms of what is it determined? Nothing that the individual does is altogether arbitrary; each act is at least partly rational, determined by his regard for what ought to be done, and dictated by what he has rationally decided in the past. Hence to accept the contention is in effect tantamount to denying it. For if the individual does decide what the ideal is, he at least decides it in terms of considerations which antedate the decision but which are not themselves subjective. He got them somewhere, and 'somewhere' here does not mean from himself; for to trace a thought or an impulse back far enough means to discover some external stimulus which gave rise to it. Hence either

the ideal is objective or it has objective roots, and this is what we learn from an absolute rejection or from an absolute acceptance of the subjectivist position. Thus the ideal is forced to have roots other than those that are to be found in the mind of the perceiving and knowing subject.

The ideal of what ought to appear cannot be limited to the painter's mind. It cannot be limited to the object, either, for an ideal is something constant and dependable; and we have already seen that this is not true of any actual thing, actuality itself being characterized by flux and change. Thus there is no ultimate home for the ideal in the actual world, and it must have its being as an independent; not as an independent material thing, that is, but as an independent possibility, suffering in that state, however, in no wise so far as its reality is concerned. Reality must not be confused with materiality if we are to understand the idealism of the arts. Matter is as real as anything but no more real than some things, such as for instance aesthetic values, which are supported by matter but not limited to it.

The painter of the third degree, then, is imitating what ought to appear through the suggestions furnished him by his own faithful conceptions of what does appear. He would never be moved to substitute an ideal for what does appear were there in his opinion no shortcomings in the appearances. All actuality is imperfect, and we can never decide upon what ought to be except with the aid of what is. The painter who endeavors to paint the ideal is thus in a manner of speaking a reformer. We have seen that the reform which he wishes to institute is of the nature of an ideal, and that this ideal is, moreover, independent of him and indeed independent of all actuality, though known only through contact of some sort with actual things. His peculiar way of

painting, his style, is his program; and his method of procedure involves and employs not only his own perceptions, not merely what appears, and, lastly, not simply any evanesecent ideal having no realtionship to the world as it actually is, but a combination of all three: his own perceptions carefully trained; what appears, so nearly as this can be ascertained; and, lastly, an ideal arrived at through a study of what his perceptions tell him are the imperfections of what actually appears. Thus the artist of the third degree is a great artist where and when he employs all the necessary faculties and methods, and these include as a prerequisite arduous training in the two methods.

The requirement of arduous training holds the key to advancement in degree of painting. The change in perception of the first degree is due to learning. We have noted the necessity of learning in the sheer act of painting what one actually 'sees,' where the untutored tendency is to see what one thinks one ought to see according to custom and tradition and a naïve conception of objects. Learning itself is not a facile process. It is made possible by (though it need not necessarily follow from) training in the ordinary tradition of the apprentice in the plastic arts: the study of models and the study of techniques and practices in painting both in theory and in actual practice. The painter of the first degree is an apprentice; the trained painter is a painter of the second degree. That is as far as most painters manage to go. Only a few struggle any further. These few require for their equipment some kind of world view, some cosmology, or system of ideals which may be applied to actuality. Often the great artists are not conscious of their wider beliefs, but they do not need to be. All they need is the ability to translate such implicit beliefs into artistic practice. They must be able, in

other words, to get their own unconsciously held cosmological beliefs onto canvas. Then they are painters of the third degree.

The age of science, of systematic inquiry of a painstaking sort, has had its impact upon art. In the plastic arts, as we have seen, the emphasis has been thrown upon method. This has its obvious advantages, for one way of exploring the possibilities of the plastic arts is to concentrate upon the problem of opening up entirely new possibilities; and the devotion to method does further this goal somewhat. But method has its limits, and the purpose of art, after all, is not to explore methods, not to remain confined to technological problems, but to produce works of art, paintings and sculpture which have an important content as well as a method. A method is a means to an end; and it is a perversion of purpose to allow the means itself to take the place of the end. The time has probably come for the dialectic of the progress of art to shift once more, and this time back to specific attention to content.

Art by its very nature is affirmative, and it is the task of the painter and the sculptor to affirm, to love life as it appears and to work so, to touch the colors and shapes of the external world fondly and even passionately with the eyes and the hands. To this end, the method of the plastic arts must remain subordinated to subject-matter. Such a subordination will have a double effect. The artist will become what he once was: a man devoted to two extremes of interest. He will wish to study and to improve his method in its most material sense, and this is a sense in which method, too, has been neglected. He will pay more attention to the materials of his craft. The direction is a more important one for the painter than for the sculptor, for it is the painter whose art

in a material sense has declined. The painter will wish to work over the texture of his materials, the color and texture of his grounds, and the quality and composition of his pigments. These of late have been streamlined to the point where the craft has considerably declined. The second effect of this shift in emphasis will be upon subject-matter. The painter will become once again an idealist. The relation between the plastic arts and phenomenology can be broken only with great peril to the plastic arts. The phenomenology which has application to the plastic arts, we must always bear in mind, is an ontological phenomenology, a study of appearances; but with a direction which is aimed toward perfection. The reformist tendencies of the artist who sees honestly through what-is into what-ought-to-be should leave their impression and never be left out of the picture or the bronze.

The artist in one of the effects of his art is an educator of the senses. The plastic artist holds within his power the ability to heighten the human perceptions which operate through vision. This sense has been held to be prior to the others; it has been deemed more fundamental. We are all in virtue of our existence and sensibilities amateur phenomenologists, and we can learn from the artist what he has at great pains discovered, if only we will attend to his work. Guided by him we shall perceive what we have never perceived before, what we had never dreamed the phenomenological world held for us to perceive. The plastic artist is the phenomenologist in practice, and this aspect of the arts is in no wise derogated by the fact that art is primarily art and secondarily everything else. The phenomenological aspect of artistic experience must not be overlooked on the grounds that the artistic experience involves an emotion of the highest sort and can be enjoyed detachedly and purely for its own

sake. We may live for the rare moments but we live for those rare moments in other moments. And it is to the benefit of those other moments that we are required to pay attention to the fact that the plastic arts lead all the arts in the phenomenological procession.

Chapter XVII

HUMAN LIFE AS A FINE ART

Logic has been out of fashion for some centuries, while analysis has not. The fact that analysis is always accomplished in terms of an implicit logic has been unknown to many, and this is true even of those who devote themselves to analysis in some specific empirical field. But now that a revival of interest in logic itself is indicated by recent developments, we may turn to those analyses which are candidly done in terms of logic without losing hope in the possibility of being understood by our contemporaries. There has been much resentment of logic on the part of those who deal with values. Logical analysis is presumed to take the joy out of life. The values which we analyze are said to be destroyed by the very methods which we employ in analysis. There is some truth to these assertions: analysis is painful. Whatever we divide we destroy; a dissected fish can no longer swim on about his business. We cannot enjoy listening to a fugue the while we are examining the principles of harmony which its voices obey. But the pain of analysis may lead to a greater understanding and therefore to greater pleasure, and this is its justification. By

analysis we are aided in our efforts at appreciation, even though the two cannot occur together but must succeed each other in time. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the art of life, on the twin assumptions that art, like anything else, is subject to analysis, and that the art of life, like the good life, is worthy of attainment.

Although the raw materials of life and of the fine arts are available to everyone, not everyone lives his life as though he were engaged in the practice of an art. There are some to whom ordinary life exhibits the characteristics of a ballet, a tragedy or a comedy; so that they continually experience the heightened excitement of an actor who feels as well as acts his role. These persons occupy in general a middle ground between the highest and the lowest, although a few of the great of this earth have undoubtedly shared in the awareness. Napoleon was conscious of his role throughout the enactment of it, but there have been others at his level who probably were not. To many intelligent men as well as to most ignorant ones, life is a series of disconnected episodes, like a bad tragedy, as Aristotle said. For them the only meaning life can have is its utter meaninglessness—when indeed they do come to think about its meaning at all, which is rarely. That is why we shall be compelled to look to special sorts of men and special sorts of lives to illustrate our thesis.

But the special sorts to which we shall look are not necessarily those which have been proclaimed the most important in the world. In some ways it is not the greatest benefactors to humanity who furnish the best illustrations of the art of living but rather the great adventurers, the great imposters and the great appreciators of life. These three groups of men, whose lives are of indirect or even dubious

benefit to mankind, constitute the best direct illustrations of our point.

In the first group we may single out Casanova and R. B. Cunninghame Grahame as typical. Casanova's *Memoirs*, with their revealing confessions concerning his supposed philosophical ambitions, throw light upon his consciousness of the unity and direction of his aims, even though his greatness rests upon his extraordinary adventures and his supernormal accomplishments with women. His life was a drama—which is to say it manifested an amazing degree of unity in the midst of the most tremendous diversity of action. Similarly, Cunninghame Grahame was able to range from living with the gauchos in South America to defending the Irish Cause in London to traveling in fanatical Arabia without inconsistency to that in which he believed so fundamentally.

In the second group we may choose Cagliostro and 'Prince' Romanoff for our illustration. The Sicilian, Giuseppe Balsamo, as 'Count' Cagliostro, posing before the Grand Master of the Maltese Order as a fellow alchemist, basking among the great houses of Southern Italy, selling love philtres in Paris and pretending to be the founder of a new system of freemasonry in London, was an eighteenth-century actor in the grand manner, self-consistent beneath his many names and disguises. Harry Gerguson is undoubtedly the great imposter of our day. To lift oneself from the humblest role in society, that of an impoverished orphan, to one of the most important, that of an exiled member of the Russian Royal family, living in a condition of the utmost wealth and prestige in the middle of the leading American oligarchy, by means of a continuous series of inner disguises, is no mean feat. But Romanoff not only became a member of this particular society; he did far more, albeit what else he did was

not his self-conscious aim. He laid bare the hollowness and mockery of the pretensions of the society. And he was moreover able to do this in a way which is extremely funny to those who know all the details. Thus, Prince Mike's life, at least that early part of his life which came to an end when he was exposed by publicity, furnishes one of the most significant personal comedies as well as the most incisive social criticism of the day.[95]

In the third group we may select James Gibbons Huneker and Havelock Ellis as our examples. These men are not so celebrated for what they did themselves as for their enjoyment and wholehearted understanding of what others have done. They are great interpreters who have made an art of the appreciation of life. Their gusto knew no bounds. Huneker was an art-intoxicated man who was often among the first to appreciate new artists and new methods in the arts. Havelock Ellis led in the deliberate comprehension of the fact that life itself could be an art. Though himself somewhat limited in capacity for participation in life, he understood very well and was able to explain what an abundant thing participation in life is and what it could mean.

The phenomenon is worth noting that our illustrations have not been taken from among the most earnest and worthy of famous men. No great artists—except in the art of living—no scientists, philosophers or political leaders, claim our attention; no outstanding moralists or religious leaders have here made a demand upon us. Why? Simply because the life of a Plato, a St. Francis, an Alexander the Great, a Solon, a Shelley, is entirely a matter of his work. A man who accomplishes something of permanent value for society in some eminent field of endeavor, such as those who bore the names

[95] See *The New Yorker*, issues October 29-November 26, 1932, inclusive.

we have mentioned, is one whose life *is* his work. In contrast to these, each example has been of one whose work is his life. Outwardly the appearance may often be the same; but essentially the situation is exactly reversed. An artist in living lives his life in a maximum of change, activity and motion; not in achievement. The lives of Johann Sebastian Bach and of Immanuel Kant are uneventful; their work is not.

Returning for present purposes to the men of our choice, observe the common factor of irregularity in all of the characters named. If life is an art, then of course it must have some form. But why is it that the shape of life is best shown through the study of lives which seem to have so little shape? The attempt to answer this question will constitute the guiding principle of this chapter. If we can find some form in what is manifestly irregular, we shall not have to look for it in that which is manifestly regular and we shall have demonstrated that it is to be found everywhere. For that it can be found everywhere is true without a doubt. Art is an ordered and calculated affair; no irregularity exists in a work of art that was not put there by design and hence exfluous. This is not to say, however, that all parts of a work of art there is nothing accidental and likewise nothing superfluous. This is not to say, however, that all patrs of a work of art are always perfectly symmetrical. On the contrary, the unity of a work of art is not a matter of *simple* balance and symmetry. A beautiful face may have different profiles and usually does, arms are of different lengths, and so on. This is what Bacon probably meant when he said that there was no great art that did not have some strangeness in the proportions. The constant and effective factor of surprise in a work of art issues from the circumstance that the appreci-

ator is never in a position to expect that such divergent elements could have a unity.

And so it is with character or with an individual's career: it contains so many dissimilar elements that we are startled to discover them exhibiting a common organization, a wholeness. The symmetrical manufactured articles of decoration, the commercialized pottery figurine or bronze ornament, usually have no artistic value whatsoever. The character and career of a poor clerk or rich banker who successfully orders and regulates his life down to the smallest detail, according to the prescribed channels of custom and institution and without imagination, are likewise lacking in artistic value. Such value, so far as the living of a life is concerned, belongs exclusively to those whose careers appear at first glance to have gotten out of hand, whose success or failure has not been uniformly paced, whose characters exhibit unusual defects and also virtues, and whose course contains sharp declivities and unexpected peaks. Not every irregular life is artistic, of course; some lives are merely irregular without the compensating organization of identity in the midst of difference; but it is the life which contains superficial irregularities, the kind which the world takes seriously, compensated by profound and hidden regularities, that is the most artistic.

Look closer at the lives of the artists in living, the adventurers, the imposters, the appreciators. What more reckless victims of chance, what more helpless playthings of large social forces, could one hope to find? And yet the art of life is most apparent in them, more apparent than it would be in the life of the average man, of the typical and pedestrian citizen. Casanova went from imprisonment to owning and managing a glove factory in Italy, running a lottery, and

paying homage to the great "*philosophe*," Voltaire, in France. Yet though his purpose be obscure and his attentions devoted to insignificant details of amorous affairs with all sorts and ranks of women, his life is knit with a singleness of purpose and a *superfluous caring* that marks him as an artist. Similarly with Prince Romanoff. Successfully posing as a Czarist prince, he was invited to a wedding given by the Mellons of Pittsburgh; but he could not fail his role of imposter, which in a sense would have come to nought had he not been exposed somehow, and so he left the train en route – with young Mellon's gold-fitted suitcase.

If, then, we wish to study the art of life more closely, we shall have to pin to our board and examine under the microscope some particular instance of it. And for this purpose we shall want some specimen not quite as extreme in the category of those who are romantic and adventurous, and for that matter not as successful, as those we have already mentioned. We shall want a typical specimen, one containing the qualities we seek, but containing *all* the qualities rather than some in high degree. We shall seek, in other words, a mediocrity in the fine art of life. This is not as easy a matter as it seems; but offhand there does appear to be a good example available. That one is Lincoln Steffens. We shall consider the information gleaned from the *Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* as evidence in the art of one man's life. The scientist who examines a specimen always does so with an hypothesis in view; he is guided by a well-defined method and works from definite principles. We shall have to study our laboratory specimen in the light of some wide propositions which are accepted as valid. Like good scientists, we shall have to bring together the abstract universal which we are endeavoring to demonstrate in the

concrete, and the singular instance which we are investigating.

Thus before we are in a position to engage in the task of studying Steffens, we must be prepared and equipped for it; since there are other considerations besides the knowledge of the details of Steffens' life. If the hypothesis already set forth be accepted, namely that some men's lives are works of art, we must next be reminded that the human lives which are works of art are only one species under the genus, 'works of art,' and that, again, the genus, 'works of art,' may itself in turn be considered only one species under the genus, 'actual things.' By 'actual' here is meant existing: participating in the world of action and reaction, said of anything which not only is capable of acting and reacting with other things but does so act and react. Thus, coming down the scale of inclusiveness, we have: actual things, works of art, the artistic lives of some men. Let us next set forth certain considerations which concern the most inclusive of these three categories, on the assumption that what concerns the whole will also concern its parts.

The field of actuality is the world of action and reaction, and an actual is anything in actuality. Whatever acts or is acted upon by another thing is an actual. Thus all things except abstract and possible universals and values are actuals. The field of possibility (which together with actuality exhausts being, so far as our knowledge of it extends) consists in all those things which can interact with other things, whether they be occupied in so doing at the moment or not. Thus actuality is part of possibility, since everything which is actual must have been also possible.

Only some things are works of art, though many more, of course, are possible. A work of art is any actual thing which

by its perfection—by the perfect relation of its parts to its whole—qualitatively symbolizes more value than it contains, and the value which it symbolizes is the value of the beautiful. As we have already noted, art is the deliberate apprehension of beauty, and beauty consists in the qualitative aspect of harmony in the perfect relation of parts to parts and of parts to whole within a whole. Hence in comparison with all actual things only some actual things are works of art. Works of art are in a tiny, an infinitesimal, minority in the actual world.

Works of art have a logic of their own. This consists in the kind of system in which postulates are set up and elaborate deductions drawn from them. The postulates must have potential significance which the deductions make actual. Both postulates and deductions must be qualitative and actual, products in most cases of the imagination. The imaginative elements in a work of art tend to center themselves in the postulates. Many artists have declared that once they have given their characters life, the characters have acted often in a way quite contrary to that which had been intended for them. By imaginative elements here is meant nothing specifically subjective; it refers to the fact that in the imaginative construction of an original work of art, elements of the actual world are placed in new combinations and permutations in which they are fused, as it were, organically.

The postulates and deductions of a work of art may both be subdivided. The postulates consist in (a) propositions held and (b) the method of application adopted. The propositions held are the essence of the postulates: those assertions with regard to truth or value or both, which are to be applied in practice and from which conclusions are to be drawn. The *method adopted* is that peculiar fashion in which it is

proposed to apply the postulates to reach conclusions in action. The deductions of a work of art consist in (c) applications and (d) conclusions. The *applications* are the actual steps by which the propositions held as postulates are put into practice according to a certain method. The *conclusions* are the final issue of the propositions as the applications reach their ultimate meaning and emerge in significance.

We may try to make this logical system somewhat clearer by showing its presence in some familiar work of art, say Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. We have, let us remember, four sets of categories: (a) propositions held, (b) method of application adopted, (c) applications and (d) conclusions. It is not possible to exhaust the analysis of any important work of art but something may be suggested. For instance, for *propositions held* in *Hamlet* we may put, 'The refraining from action which follows from doubt and indecision may lead to actions which are worse in their consequences than those of forthright decision.' For *method of application* adopted, read 'An historical drama objectifies the problem and a drama concerning personages in places of high responsibility intensifies it.' The *applications* consist in the actual chain of events in the play, all the dire consequences of the rationalization of inaction instead of action: the murder of an innocent meddling fool; the death of Ophelia, the beloved, under the most painful of circumstances; the alienation of associations; devious machinations and scheming; banishment and miraculous safe return. The conclusions are made up by realization of the necessity for action under circumstances which have accumulated to prevent the cold and cautious execution of what must be done, by final action ending with the death of all remaining principals, including the hero himself.

The logic of art is by no means confined to the theatre, it

can be seen in any art. In music, for example, the propositions held are the themes to be presented, and the method adopted is the manner of their presentation which has been decided upon; the applications consist in the actual development and variation of the themes, and the conclusions are the final variations plus the coda. In the novel, the first chapter usually sets up the postulates, giving both the propositions held and the method adopted. The propositions held are evidenced by date and place, characters, beginning of plot, atmosphere. The method adopted is the *way* the story is to be told, the manner of approach and presentation, the peculiar fashion of the plot's unfolding. A character has a wooden leg, for instance, but little reference is made to it, except that we know it will be a potent factor in the remainder of the book. The deductions are provided by the actual telling of the story, the unfolding of the plot, the deepening of the atmosphere. The conclusions consist in the final ending of the story. the moral implied, the dénouement revealed, the final unraveling. We see how the wooden leg becomes an inescapable condition and what its owner as a consequence of having to limp all through the book finally comes to. The postulates are contained in the legend which the artist decides to tell, the scene he decides to paint, the figure he wishes to model. In all cases, selection involves elimination—the elimination of everything not selected. Given the narrow range of choice entailed by selection, the artist must then work out the potentialities into actuality. This is the task assigned by applications and conclusions. A great work of art is one which exhausts its potential deductions from wide postulates. How difficult it would be to imagine variations on any theme which Bach had chosen to vary but failed to include! His variations on a theme tend to be exhaustive.

With these few words in explanation of what is meant here by actual things and by works of art, it should be possible to make clear in what sense at least the term, art, can be applied to the lives of men. All men who have lived have had lives, but not all have had artistic lives. The consideration of which human lives are artistic and which are not is probably a marginal one. There is no absolute threshold of demarcation, and each shades off imperceptibly into the other; nevertheless, there is a well-recognizable difference. He who manages to live consistently according to a deliberately if implicitly chosen set of postulates and who in his life achieves the apprehension of beauty by the perfect relation of particular episodes in his life to his whole life may be said to have made of that life a work of art.

In the art of life, the same logical structure, the same elements, as are found in any other work of art, prevail. The selection of postulates begins before birth, which is the positive if unconscious choice with respect to being something actual and singular. To be born means to have selected a particular existence, involving particular parents, who thenceforth are the most intimate part of the environment, and a particular milieu; and the fact that the embryo, or even earlier, the germ-plasm, has not the power of ratiocination or selection in no way alters the plain, objective fact that a determination has been made. The propositions held in a man's life consist in his beliefs, beliefs or postulates, conscious and unconscious (and they are chiefly unconscious), which he acquires either by inheritance or from his environment, concerning what is true and what he ought to do. That which a man holds to be true so deeply that he does not know he holds it, yet is prepared without notice to act from it, may fairly be described as his postulates. Inherited postu-

lates consist in capacities or in the signal absence of capacities. A man with extremely short legs does not have even the potentiality of a great runner. Environmentally acquired postulates may come from any period and region of the environment, but chiefly from the early environment. The early environment is preëmpted almost entirely by parents, primarily by the mother. We frequently like, or dislike, what our parents like, or dislike; and we mistakenly attribute such similarity to inheritance through genes, when it can be more simply—and satisfactorily—explained as an imitation of our parents, an early, acquired character, obtained from that part of our immediate environment which we term our parents. Thus most of what we think we have inherited, such as specific mannerisms, taste preferences, and other peculiarities of one sort or another come from early parental environment. The postulates of a man's life are not to be found in his casual beliefs: propositions and statements which he entertains for a brief while; rather are they the profoundly held propositions which, *as* beliefs, consist in that from which he acts or at least tends to act. Instinctive, spontaneous and sudden actions betray true beliefs more readily than any other method. For frequently the reasons we give for our actions differ from our true reasons, even though we may be arguing in perfectly good faith. We do not always know the beliefs we really do hold. Nevertheless, it is of course true that education is the opportunity to add enormously to postulates; this is made possible by the fact that in the process of education we learn both more and less than we had planned to learn, and what we learn takes years to present itself to us consciously.

The method adopted for the application of such beliefs is the path chosen in life; what career we decide to follow

and how we decide to follow it. The major portion of a man's life, considered in terms of time consumed, space traversed and energy expended, consists in the business of applications. Importance, however, is not entirely a matter of importunateness; and we can never measure importance entirely in physical units. The decision to choose a direction in life, and the first step in that direction, are more important to the future and to our lives as a whole than all the remaining steps. The actual physical business of taking the steps subsequent to the first exhibits energy and requires time and space in order to be executed; but the greater importance is assigned to the resolution to follow a certain course. A boy may see an operation performed or an accident happen and may then and there decide to become a doctor. This may occur in a flash, but it constitutes a method adopted for the application of beliefs. His first effort to secure the permission of his parents to follow such a career is the first step in that direction. Both of these elementary occurrences are as nothing, considered in terms of energy expended, compared to the long years of preparation and training: the premedical course at the university, the four years of medical school, the interneship, and the setting up of an office and a private practice. Yet it was the elementary occurrences—all out of proportion to the whole—which determined the others to be what they became.

The applications of the beliefs according to the method elected consists in the actual living of life. The choice of a career is the selection of a method. This is the essence of performing acts, of doing, and of suffering events and the consequences of events. What is done by a man in the course of his career is the application of the postulates by means of the method, *i.e.*, a matter of applying the deductions from

the postulates by the method. Thus under *applications* must be included what is publicly recognized as a life: the actual living of life itself, the daily round of activities which existentially constitutes the way in which we spend the adult years allotted to us. The hours devoted to what in our logical analysis is termed applications are far in excess of what is devoted to other departments; the bulk of the years over which we have any control is a matter of applications. The affair of applications, like the choice of postulates and the adoption of a method, is more or less voluntary, limited only by the resistance of the materials in the environment in which a man must work. It is the particular field, however, in which most of the opposition which is encountered occurs. There is a large amount of freedom in the choice of postulates and in the adoption of a method but not in applications. Here the freedom is limited by the obstacles to execution. The application of the postulates according to the method can only go so far as it is allowed to go by the peculiar qualifications of the environment in which the man who holds them must work. Thus the field of applications is the sphere of conflict and perhaps also of failure.

The conclusions of the logical system consist in the accomplishments or manifest failures of accomplishment which round out a life. They are usually drawn for us by others, since they require for completion the termination of a life, and also because in order to arrive at a correct interpretation of the conclusions of a system it is necessary to see that system as a whole. Conclusions are a matter of positive and active objective accomplishments in the world. They can be observed in what a man leaves behind him. When they are negative in quality, they exist as harm done, and when neutral only as logical propositions. Thus they involve no freedom

and occupy little time. If a man is not to be allowed to draw the conclusions concerning his own life until that life is over, he is not at all free to make them other than they are. And if they are a summing up of what he has accomplished or failed to accomplish, they do not require much duration to enact. Yet, once again, as in the case of the postulates and method adopted, their importance is far greater than that of the portion of his life requiring the most in terms of energy, space and time. For the conclusions are the end for which the rest existed. Be the conclusions a matter of personal enjoyment along the way merely, or of objective and social achievement for good, the fact remains that the conclusions striven toward furnished the end in terms of which the existence of the previous remainder was able to make sense.

All of the foregoing description is sure to sound horribly voluntaristic and uninterrupted. But of course we know that such is not the case and that real life is not like that. Everything that a man wishes to do as well as everything that he does or has done is influenced, warped and perhaps even totally defeated by external and (as he had hoped and thought) irrelevant external circumstances, that is, by what we have learned to call accident or chance. The performance of a man's life as a work of art is at the mercy of chance happenings as well as conflicting laws. These happening and conflicting laws may interfere slightly, determine largely, aid greatly or defeat entirely, the choice of postulates, the adoption of a method, the opportunities for applications and the arrival at conclusions.

The artist in inert materials works with a more easily controlled medium than does the artist in living. To make a work of art out of clay, paint and canvas, or musical sounds, is to

work with a stubborn material, it is true. But then one not nearly so stubborn, obstinate and complex as the details of a daily life. The plastic artist, let us say, uses only part of his life and part of his immediate environment; while the artist in living uses the whole of his immediate environment and the whole of his life. This presents a greater task, one filled with enormous and in most cases insuperable obstacles. Probably nobody succeeds altogether in being an artist in living. But many men have tried, even if not candidly and in so many words. They have tried to make of their lives works of art, even if not with such a consciously-conceived aim. Of these men it can truly be said that, successes or failures, they are artists all the same.

We are now in possession of the tools with which to interpret the life of Lincoln Steffens, which is to serve as the example of our thesis.

In his life Steffens was not too great an artist, but the bare bones of the logical method which the art of living entails protrude plainly. His original writings are not important and his accomplishments few and small. But his postulates loom obviously and his efforts to draw what deductions he could are most apparent. His failure has no cosmic significance; yet his life does offer a primary advantage for us in that his ostensive purpose and his real one were identical. This situation is rare in human existence, and the study of it is easier than that of most. He was not a very great man, and so it happens that in the art of living his illustrative value exceeds the value of his life as itself a work of art.

The environment of Steffens' day was that of an America fast coming of age. He was born in 1866 and died in 1936; he lived to see the development of the western United States, the ripeness of Europe, the newspaper world of the eastern

seaboard, and the political corruption which spread so rapidly from city governments to the states and under the Harding administration even to the Federal government. Tempered by the formalism of Europe and the freedom which existed in the western states of that period, Steffens was led to adopt a certain set of beliefs, which he was to employ throughout his life as postulates of action. In addition to the influences emanating from the social milieu of his date and place, Steffens was led to his postulates of belief also by the characters of his parents. He has recorded [96] that his mother was of a pleasant disposition, inclined to be teasing; and that his father who shared these traits also went further to the assumption that there was something of the nature of a joke even about facts. His mother probably endowed him with a happy love of life and his father with the refusal to take life as it was too seriously.

Among the postulates for which we can discover evidence in Steffens' early beliefs (we certainly cannot hope to discover them all) are the following: (1) that things are not what they ought to be in the actual social world; (2) that this world is worthy of inquiry; (3) that the answer to the problem presented by the necessity for a better social world lies in the field of ethics; and (4) that the field of ethics is a realistically objective one involving values independent of the individual.

The last point Steffens acquired by reason of a fortunate association with a Greek scholar from England named Evelyn Nixon who was for a time his tutor in California. It should be noted here that the postulates or beliefs by which a man's life is conducted are not fixed forever. They become

[96] All of the substantial evidence of Steffens' life employed here is taken from *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (New York, 1931, Harcourt, Brace). Some knowledge of the main facts contained therein is presupposed.

to some extent altered and modified by the adventures of their applications. Thus the postulates lead to certain applications, and the applications themselves to certain changes in the original postulates. It should also be noted that few men, if indeed any, are wholly aware of the whole set of beliefs by which they either do act or would act were the relevant occasions which could call them forth to arise. Steffens himself observes in his remarks concerning the effect of prohibition on big business that the conclusions which he sometimes reached consciously were those to which he had been brought unconsciously on previous occasions.

Steffens sought in the imperfect social world for a method by which he could improve its morals as practiced. This led him first to an inquiry into pure ethics, both in American and European universities. The tentative conclusion at which he arrived as a result of these investigations was that nothing decisive was known in the academic world with respect to ethics. His marriage and return to America in search of work by means of which he could support his family coincided with his resolution to abandon the abstract field of academic ethics and with his attempt to discover in the hurly-burly of the social world itself just what was responsible for its limitations. He decided, in other words, to abandon his first method of empirical inquiry into pure ethics which could be applied, and to follow instead the mistaken empirical method which has proved so common (but also so fruitless) in the field of the social sciences: to study the social field itself, empirically, in an effort to get it to yield its own hypothesis. This well-meant and earnestly pursued though ill-conceived version of the scientific method, the method of inverse probability, resulted in a kind of rat race. The helter-skelter, trial-and-error method of searching for

the abstract truths of the good life through a painstaking investigation of actual political conditions led him to the discovery of a pattern but no cause. He found that behind every instance of organized political corruption stood the nefarious influence of big business. But he never succeeded in penetrating beneath this corrupting influence to find out why it worked as it did. Of city government after city government Steffens tells the same story; over and over we hear of the city boss, the smoothly running political machine, the big corporation power. But that is all, and there is no generalization or induction from these instances. Thus once again the mistaken version of scientific method proved inconclusive in the social field.

Observe that the radical break between the several approaches to Steffens' problem was responsible for their failure. When he was occupied with the study of pure ethics, he never sought for its application to current social conditions. And when he was occupied with the study of current social conditions, he was never reminded of the principles of pure ethics. Thus he violated the scientific postulates that no generalization can do without actual instances, and that conversely no actual instances can stand without some generalization which they are illustrating and exemplifying. And he violated the second methodological caution of science that no number of random empirical investigations will yield their own hypothesis. Steffens was not able to devote himself to the application of principles other than to apply his separate methods, since his postulates or beliefs were almost exclusively methodological. His muckraking in politics was pure inquiry, and his inquiry was confined altogether to muckraking. Thus there were no real applications as such and no real conclusions of a positive nature.

The applications of Steffens' life appear at first glance to be more varied than they actually were—as varied as they were. He certainly knew many people, obscure as well as prominent, famous as well as infamous, and had many friends among them. He certainly visited many places in the United States. He ranged from the New York police courts, the underworld, and the bulls and bears of Wall Street, to the newspaper field and the corrupt city governments of St. Louis, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and elsewhere. But after a while his experiences as well as his investigations developed a sameness which was stuffy and stifling. He came to know the nature of the corruptions which he could expect to find and usually did. The city bosses, the corrupt politicians with their better side and bad actions, the big business men who were human and yet paid off—amounted to a pattern which rarely failed him in any of its details. Yet he could not go on from there, and so the applications became an end in themselves. Steffens had learned to spend his energetic hours treading a homemade wheel within his self-confining cage. His own limitations rather than the restrictions of the environment confined his efforts within the province which held them. The only real conflict which Steffens may be said to have encountered is that the structure of partially corrupt bureaucracy and oligarchically-perverted democracy which Steffens shook at the top remained unaffected at its foundations. The corruptions existed, everybody knew that they existed; but Steffens laid them bare to the public view. This was a service; and the applications of principles to which Steffens devoted a larger part of his life, the long middle years, were spent in this service.

The conclusions which he did reach reflect the poverty of a set of postulates or beliefs which do not include

anything of an affirmative sort. He decided that (1) if politics in America are bad, it is because they are made so by the pressure and purchase of privileged business; (2) in some way, the system of private enterprise, unrestrained, is at fault, since some of the business men who rise to the top themselves prove to be essentially good men, men of good will possessing a kind of fundamental honesty and humanity; (3) the search for ethics is a failure; and (4) failures are sometimes illustrative.

Thus Steffens lived what is ordinarily called a full life, *i.e.*, one crowded with experiences, including the personal knowledge and friendship of all varieties of persons and including many places visited and in general living contexts sampled and investigated. Yet in a sense his life was also thin and empty. The thinness and emptiness are due to the fact that his investigations ended in failure, if we make an exception of their illustrative value, which, incidentally, he, too, recognized. The illustrative value bears with it the seeds of the moral that the solution of superficial and obvious social problems does not lie at any obvious and superficial level of analysis but rather at some level more profound. Steffens did not probe deeply enough beneath the surface, did not penetrate to any radical level of analysis, probably because, although he occupied himself at various periods in his life both with pure ethics and applied morality, he did not see any connection between them. In so failing, he fell short of employing the scientific method, since science requires the actual connections between the utmost abstract generality of propositions and the utmost concrete singularity of facts, and seeks for causes at analytical levels which lie many layers below the level of effects.

Looking back over the whole plan and execution of Stef-

fens' life, it is easy to see from a logical point of view exactly what happened. There is nothing essentially wrong with the propositions which he held as beliefs. We have, of course, failed to enumerate them all, but among those which are most prominent we can find nothing invalid. The method of application adopted is, as we have noted, quite another story. The method adopted, though differing in kind from the propositions held is part of the postulates; and it is in the understanding of the proper method as well as in the use of it that Steffens went off. In all likelihood this defection was due to a combination of circumstances. It was due to the fact that his analysis of the nature of the ethical problem failed to reveal to him the proper connections between abstract formulations and concrete fields of action, or in other words to the fact that his intelligence was insufficient to meet the demands upon it which he himself had set. But another circumstance which helped to defeat his efforts was the chance fact that he happened to be thrown into the lowest and ugliest side of practical politics—corrupt city machines and petty graft—by the necessity for making a living for himself and his family. The bad method and the ugly applications combined to insure both that his search for an ethics should be unduly protracted and that it should issue in nothing positive. Thus the conclusions of his life, being what they were, came as a natural consequence and logical implication of his postulates, method and field of application.

The inspection which has been made here—all too briefly—of the instances of Steffens' career could be enlarged; moreover, it could be repeated for any life of which we possessed sufficient factual evidence. *Every life-pattern represents the effort to follow a logical system of deductions founded on*

a postulate-set. This logical system, if it is to be a sufficient guide and to produce results which are cogent, must be more than a logical system; it must be an *axiological* system and moreover one which is capable of being analyzed logically. Those persons who try to follow a set of beliefs and in so doing to crowd a good deal of activity and receptivity into the small but highly potential living space which is the human being; those who concern themselves with an enormous abundance of movement and action and also of thinking; those who are the most conscious of a goal, an aim, a limit, an ideal, which they may or may not attain but toward which they strive immensely, paying enormous attention none the less to every detail of existence along the way; are more able than are others to reveal most clearly the system which forms the structure of an human life.

Appearances are often deceptive. An abundant life which is constructed on a deliberate plan, conscious or unconscious, may yet be an austere life. There are postulates which may be adopted whereby wealth is measured in terms of what it is possible to do without. But in any case it is always necessary to show the underlying motive of consistency. The extent to which this consistency prevails despite external interferences and personal difficulties is one measure of greatness, always provided, of course, that the consistency is oriented toward a sufficiently valuable goal.

The analysis of a life-pattern is not easy to make in terms of oneself. The logical framework which is to be uncovered is not, by definition, a surface affair; and there are few persons who can discover their own hidden springs of action. Postulates are held tightly in beliefs, many of which are unconscious; and it is doubtful whether any mortal has ever been wholly aware of the sum of his profoundest and most

fundamental beliefs. Yet the task involved in such analysis is surely worth attempting. The cognizance, even though it be partial and fragmentary, of one's propositions held and method adopted is of tremendous advantage when one is in the midst of those applications of which the bulk of one's adult life consists. It was probably something of this conception that Socrates had in mind when he observed that the unexamined life is not worth living.

The artist in living is one who can occasionally step outside the confines which are marked for him by the small details with which he is constantly faced and which occupy so much of his waking life. He can thus examine that life, as it were objectively and dispassionately, always with the consequence that he will be able to reconsider its purpose and redirect its aim. Even if the effect of such an examination be merely to validate the purpose and confirm the aim, he will have been made more keenly aware of his guiding principles; and this awareness in turn will lend content to his daily round of activities. Thus to see life as an art is to be in a position to live it somewhat better. Understood in this way, it becomes clear that the good life has its own aesthetic standards.

Chapter XVIII

THE DECLINE OF LITERARY CHAOS

IT is no less a truth for being a truism to say that the artist is one who seeks for the meaning of existence, or to add that the more capable the artist the profounder the level at which he conducts his search. The artist takes delight in singular things and occurrences, but if he is a genuine artist he is delighted only to the extent to which he is able to find in them a universal import. The lesser artist is willing to settle for what is merely general, while the great artist strives onward toward the realm of that which is ubiquitous and eternal. In the field of literature, and especially of the novel, the description of persons and events without symbolic meaning remains at the stage of mere reporting, as in the regional or 'realistic' novel. The book which describes, and in describing attacks, the terrible limitations imposed upon southern communities in the United States by irrational prejudice against the Negro, is apt to be forgotten once the conditions of inequality which justified the attack no longer exist. Can Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt* survive the disappearance of the ethos of the American business man of the nineteen twenties, when already in the

nineteen forties the work has begun to appear seriously dated and old-fashioned? The poorhouses and orphan asylums of nineteenth-century England have been considerably reformed, yet the novels of Dickens remain as great as ever, because the meaning which was put into them included more than a protest against the maladministration of such social institutions; it included an appeal to the sublime tragedy, and comedy, of the human predicament, a condition which is not likely to undergo any fundamental change so long as people remain people. The work of art which concentrates upon universals at the expense of singulars is apt to be sterile, a barren allegory in which the bones of the moral show through too plainly to have any effect but the opposite of the one intended. Thus the artist is constrained to emphasize neither the historical order of singulars nor the logical order of universals in the pursuit of his method. In the writings of the greatest of literary artists, the balance between the unique singularity of persons and events on the one hand and of the eternal verities on the other is maintained with a smooth blending which does not allow us to perceive how it could ever have been otherwise.

The properties of universality and singularity appear in existence under many guises, and there are many ways in which they are apprehended by the artist. We know them more familiarly, for instance, as elements of order and of chance. Order manifests itself as uniformity, regularity, law, system, consistency; while chance manifests itself as chaos, spontaneity, abundance, variety, contradiction. No description of existence, or of the symbolism suggested by what exists, could possibly be adequate were it not to contain aspects both of order, in some one of its various manifestations, and of chance. The meaning for which the artist seeks

lies somehow in the relation between the two orders. The artist, needless to add, is not necessarily conscious of his problem in just these abstract terms; but the problem itself is implicit in his method and the field in which that method operates.

In addition to these two elements, then, there is a third consideration of no less importance, and this is the problem of the relationship which prevails between them. How is order related to chance, and, conversely, how is chance related to order? The American philosopher, Charles S. Peirce, admitted his failure to understand aesthetics and art; yet he invented a tremendous theory of the relation of chance to order. He said that chance begets order, a theory which occurred to him in the course of applying the new statistical method to fairly ancient moral considerations. He meant that given a sufficiently large number of instances, usually requiring a very long run of time, mere chance happening would begin to manifest some incipient kind of order. Chance, in Peirce's view, is not a product of ignorance; it is something entirely objective: the sheer randomness of great populations of events whose indefinitely large multiplicity provides that certain types of events may happen again, and in so doing occasion a tendency to repeat the process, until a habit is established and a law approximated. The argument is too long to reproduce here, but the details are interesting. Peirce failed to point out whether he believed that the law behind the uniformity of behavior was also generated by the large number of instances, or whether the latter tended to approximate law by sheer repetition; but the belief in law underlies his position even though it is only stated explicitly in other connections.

Order and chance and the relations between them char-

acterize existence to a very large extent, and so the artist who is concerned with the discovery of artistic values in existence is naturally fascinated by both orderly and disorderly manifestations of these values. The ultimate concern of the artist is of course the graded values, that is to say, values in their proper order. But there are two ways of satisfying this concern open to him. He can strive to get at the order directly, or he can strive to get at it indirectly by means of the very chance which constitutes its opposite. The first method is more that of the scientist and the philosopher than the artist. For the scientist works with particular facts to reveal universal laws, whereas the artist works with particular feelings to reveal universal values. The relation of particular fact to universal law is exemplification; the relation of particular feeling to universal value is symbolism. The method of the artist, then, is one involving mediation, and the medium of such a method is often started toward the opposite of the end sought; indirection is routed through chaos to order. This method puts the emphasis of the artist upon the relations between chance and order, both of which contain elements he is seeking. For each contains properties which must be taken into consideration by the other. The attractiveness of order is of course its consistency, while the attractiveness of chance is its abundance. Consistency and inclusiveness are coordinate criteria of the worth of any system. We alternate from time to time in the type of emphasis chosen. The greatest artists endeavor to demonstrate how much of chaos can be made to reveal its order. Put in other words, they attempt to show by means of artistic values how much of order there is in apparently confused, contradictory and chaotic existence.

The measure of this aspect of art can best be shown by

submitting it to specific examples, and here of course our examples must come from the work of those artists who have been the most preoccupied with chaotic properties as such. Not all artists who have been fascinated by the material of the irrational have been equally great artists. We may see the chaotic expertly treated by Dostoyevsky, and then we may witness its successive decline at the hands of Gide and Saroyan. Of course no direct succession will be intended here except in the transition from Dostoyevsky to Gide; Gide has been heavily influenced by Dostoyevsky, a debt which he has been only too willing to acknowledge; but it is doubtful whether Saroyan has been influenced by either of the others. The examples we shall take from the work of these men will all be studies of murder, since situations involving murder, its motives and execution, contain large elements of confusion and chaos.

If it is true, as Peirce has insisted, that chance begets order, the illustrations must remain on a statistical basis. For it is only in large populations of instances that the emergence of order from chaos can be discerned. Statistical theorists are undoubtedly correct in their assertion that statistical averages can tell us nothing at all about the next single instance. Given fair throws of a coin under properly controlled conditions, the probability asserts that out of a hundred throws fifty will fall heads and fifty tails. Now if we have thrown the coin thirty-five times, say, and all thirty-five have brought tails, certainly a head is due. Yet the chances of the next throw being heads are still fifty-fifty. In the demonstration of order through chaos in art, then, how is the artist to work? For those artists who are fascinated by the spectacle of chaos, the problem is how to show that chance begets order in a single instance. Obviously this cannot be done symbolically.

It is no accident that the method of art involves symbolism. For the artist must work with single instances; he can tell only one story at a time, paint only one picture or sing one song. The story, the picture or the song, would mean nothing artistically unless it dragged in its wake a wide penumbra of meaning. Behind every concrete object of art is reflected the shadows of countless absent particulars which it affectively symbolizes. The hold upon us of a character in fiction, for instance, is its ability to remind us of all those actual people who are therein described. It is not the particularity of such a figure but rather its valuational generality which carries the appeal. We have never met Polonius nor shall we ever meet him: there is no such person. Yet we meet him every day and he lives for us because we have met so many dull, busybody, meddling bores in high places. Needless to emphasize, the abstract qualities which are embodied in a fictional character do not of themselves constitute the artistic property, and indeed they are incapable by themselves of carrying it. They require embodiment, embodiment in a particular symbolism; and it is just this step which the artist is obliged to furnish. Our problem, then, in this chapter, is to illustrate with cases the symbolism of chaos, the way in which concrete instances of art are made to carry the suggestion symbolically of how chaos (or chance) begets order.

The relation of statistics to symbolism is an obscure and difficult field, as yet totally unworked. Universality is as vague as it is broad, and its vagueness is a natural consequence of its broadness; what reaches afar cannot ever be seen clearly. What, in the language of the statistical method, represents a large population does so in an abstract way, and lends itself readily to counting. But symbolic representation contains the vagueness of universality, as does all qualitative

value. The estimation of the population of what is represented not abstractly after the manner of logic and mathematics but, qualitatively after the manner of all symbolism has not yet lent itself to a successful method. But in symbolism there is an aspect from which it may be viewed as an example of statistical probability, despite the fact that the qualitative value of universality contains a vagueness of generality which defies simple enumeration. The mathematical approach to art is no more a matter of simple enumeration than the field of higher mathematics is confined to the real number system. Statistical symbolism is a topic for the future.

The first, and by far the greatest, example is that offered by Dostoyevsky. *Crime and Punishment* has been called by many a psychological study, and this is what to a subjectively oriented interpretation it appears to be. Perhaps it even has a value as such, but this is a question for the psychologists to study. At any rate the psychological value of the novel is not its artistic value. The artistic value can best be approached through ontological considerations. There is a sense in which ontology has no field of interest of its own. Pure ontology is the most powerful of studies. But in connection with other fields, ontology is a mere solvent which makes the fields under consideration stand out in all their clean and glittering purity. It lays bare the foundations upon which they rest. The ontological considerations of aesthetic content forces us to view *Crime and Punishment* as a study in the symbolism of the emergence of order from chaos through concentration on the chaotic. In great art such as this the characters and events remain qualitative in their singularity while symbolizing universal, even ontological, values.

The central event in the Russian novel we are considering is the murder of the old woman by Raskolnikov: why did he kill her? We may pass at once over the obvious motives. Alyona Ivanovna had money, but Raskolnikov did not take it. We may even be willing to admit that before the murder he *thought* that his motive was theft; yet he may have been wrong, since few if any of us are capable of understanding completely the springs of our own actions. And even if we say that his self-analysis was correct and theft was *at the time* his motive, there is much left unexplained. Certainly Raskolnikov himself is portrayed as having been none too sure. Later he tells Sonia that he wanted to have the daring, and that this was the reason he did it. The chance and the chaos in society exist at the bottom of the class hierarchy, because it is chiefly there that the ugly side of life exhibits itself most clearly; the filth, the poverty, the evil and the suffering are at that level most surely revealed. And it is there, too, of course, that the impulse toward the breaking of existing social relations finds its strongest incentive. If order exists even in chaos, then order is real, and we can expect to find it in greater abundance, at higher strata of society. Dostoyevsky, in all his novels and indeed throughout his life, was fascinated by the artistic problem presented by the necessity of looking for elements of order in chaos, or, to put it in another way, for elements of salvation in the most unmixed evil.

The point is illustrated in a particular way by Dostoyevsky's preoccupation with gambling. He was a terrific gambler and disposed of (for him) huge sums in this way. The usual motive of the gambler is quick profits; but if we view Dostoyevsky's passion for gambling in the context of his life and his other interests, we can see that he was more

statistically minded. It is not for nothing that the statistician's examples come so often from the gaming table. For when we know what the percentage relations are in any given case, we can recall that the future is just around the corner: will the next card, the next throw of the dice, the next turn of the roulette wheel bear out the percentages predicted or will they not? We can hardly wait to see, and the profit or loss, seen in this way, is merely the marker of the accuracy of the percentages as borne out by events. Gambling for the purposes of statistical method is merely a swift way of collecting relatively large populations of instances. Dostoyevsky no doubt needed the money and could have used it had he not been willing to risk it back again; but profit could hardly have been his sole interest.

The point is illustrated, this time in a general way, by the interpretation of Dostoyevsky made by Beardsley.[97] The underground is Dostoyevsky's metaphor for the lowest order of society and for the lowest characters in that order—for chaos. The way to heaven lies through the underground, the way to order through chaos. The idiot, the drunkard, the intimidated and worthless, the beaten, the murderer, these are the inhabitants of the underground, the instruments through which salvation shall come. Dostoyevsky is always looking for The Good, for an ecstatic Good, for God; but he insists on looking for it, for Him, among instances of unadulterated evil. Raskolnikov's deliberate choice of evil, a choice whose deliberateness accords well with his own chosen motives of theft, is the first step he must take on his long upward climb toward the raising of society to its Christ-like possibilities. The life of Sonia repeats the theme in a minor

[97] Monroe C. Beardsley, "Dostoyevsky's Metaphor of the 'Underground' " in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. III (1942), p. 265.

key, the girl turned prostitute to earn bread for her family, who appears like a far-off, shining white light, in whose name Raskolnikov finds he is forced to the confession of his crime and the willing shouldering of seven years of exile in Siberia, provided that with her at the end of that time he can initiate a new order. His identity, his emergence, in other words, from the underground, begins, as Beardsley very well understands, with the commission of the murder, since it is there that his self-consciousness begins. For an unidentified entity in the social chaos, there can be no moral conscience because there is no self-consciousness, no responsibility, to contain it. In the end Raskolnikov escapes from the chaos of the underground; he becomes differentiated and discrete, but at what a price! Only at the cost of the most intense guilt and suffering is it possible. But, then, at least, he is on his way to God.

We are in a position to see now what the motive of the murder was. The psychological explanation is at this point in full flight. The book is not a study of crime and punishment in the police sense, either, for the law which is being broken, the crime which is being committed, the money which is being sought, and even in a sense the persons who are being involved, are mere instruments in a passion play where the passion itself and its high symbolism constitute the central characters. Why did Raskolnikov kill the old woman if not because murder as motiveless as that must constitute the extreme of social disorder, a fertile field for the pursuit of the reality of the elements of order? Assuredly he had no ordinary motive, and in the ordinary sense he had no motive at all. It is indeed just this absence of motive which makes the theme of the novel; the absence of motive is in this case the motive itself; to seek chaos in search of order,

to commit the most dastardly of crimes in search of God's absolute moral law which states that thou shalt not kill: where else shall we find a motive and a theme so pure?

The story of the raising of Lazarus which Raskolnikov compelled Sonia to read to him, and toward the end of the book the nightmare of a world gone mad which he experiences, are very much to the point. In these episodes the contrast is directly indicated. The act without apparent motive is a random act, but in the mind of the actor we see that chaos, which Nietzsche says, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, we must have within us in order to give birth to a dancing star. Only the imperfect can give birth to the perfect; absolute evil is a limit which, once we have touched it, is sure to turn us back on our very long journey toward the good. This is the moral secret which lies at the heart of the actual existence of human beings. Raskolnikov reassures Sonia and explains why he needs her when he tells her that he is glad she has committed evil deeds. "You, too, have transgressed . . . have had the strength to transgress. You have laid hands on yourself, you have destroyed a life . . . your own (it's all the same!)" [98] We are at this point further from the good than we ever were, but at least we are headed in the right direction; we are facing it and striving toward it, knowing then that there is no other path and no other avenue we have not explored.

For the purposes of this chapter, then, the important feature of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* is the deliberate commission of a murder by one whose motive is not what he thinks it to be because his true motive for the meaning of the tale is the deep significance imparted to his act by the very absence of motive.

[98] Part IV, chapter IV.

Let us turn next to a famous French novelist and admirer of Dostoyevsky, André Gide, and to his novel, *Les Caves du Vatican.* Gide wrote a book about Dostoyevsky; there can be little doubt of the strength of the influence. We shall in the study of this author and his book want to know how the motiveless murder fares, how it is executed and how interpreted.

When we turn from Dostoyevsky's young man in *Crime and Punishment* to Gide's young man in *The Vatican Swindle* (to use the title of the English translation), what a surprise awaits us. Raskolnikov had been rather serious, a character willing to commit murder yet intent upon his soul's salvation. Lafcadio Wluiki, on the other hand, is frivolous and fundamentally evil, for he is willing to commit murder while remaining intent only upon entertainment and the avoidance of boredom. The influence in Gide of Dostoyevsky is plain, a fact which does not hide its naïveté and literalness of treatment; the simple failure of Gide to understand Dostoyevsky would be pitiful if it were not so ludicrously apparent. Dostoyevsky's man commits a motiveless murder—in a way, but only in a way, as we have noted. Lafcadio commits a murder for Gide and first announces its motivelessness.

"'A crime without a motive,' went on Lafcadio, 'what a puzzle for the police!'"[99] These are the words of the murderer, Lafcadio, speaking a few moments before the murder. Monsieur Wluiki is presented to us now as a homosexual sadist, now as an irresponsible fellow entirely lacking in the moral sense. Lafcadio is made to say that he

> . . . could have clasped the whole of mankind to my heart in my single embrace—or strangled it, for that matter. Human life!

[99] *The Vatican Swindle* (New York, Knopf, 1925), p. 215.

What a paltry thing! And with what alacrity I'd risk mine if only some deed of gallantry would turn up—something really rather pleasantly rash and daring.[100]

The occasion that suits him does turn up on a journey from Rome to Paris. An old man enters his compartment in the railway car, an old man who is not distinguished—or offensive—in any special way, an old man Lafcadio has never seen before. At a convenient moment crossing a bridge, Lafcadio quickly opens the door and pushes the old man out. The old man is killed, of course, and Lafcadio in order to escape detection is forced to change the plans he has laid for a sea voyage to the Orient. Lafcadio is in a sense chaos itself; he has no feeling for social order, for morals; he has no particular plans for his own future. He is capable of anything and accomplishes nothing, nothing, that is, except the utmost evil. He is not sorry, he has no regrets; he does not even have any qualms when another man is arrested and charged with the murder, not even when the other man proves to be Protos, his old schoolfellow and chum.

What, then, is Gide's point? Is it the motiveless murder of Dostoyevsky? Hardly, for Dostoyevsky is in quest of the solution to a theological problem—one might say *the* theological problem. Gide's murder is a motiveless murder, but there is no theology involved. As for the distinction between chaos and order, the relationship is inverted. There is an abundance and variety of chaos in the happenings of Dostoyevsky's characters even though the characters themselves are orderly and good of soul. In *The Vatican Swindle* there is the kind of tight order we are apt to find in a well-written detective novel: the events are closely knit; the people we have met we meet again; clues are laid down and picked up

[100] *The Vatican Swindle*, p. 206.

at exactly the right time and in the correct situation. Yet the whole leaves an impression of going nowhere. At least that is the kindest interpretation we can put upon it; a less kind one might lead us to the conclusion that the effect of the whole is amoral, antisocial and evil. Dostoyevsky, irrespective of the details of his work, we feel intends no harm; Gide in the same fashion makes us feel that he intends no good. Gide's characters lack the high emotionalism which prevails in *Crime and Punishment*. The crime is premeditated murder, not murder committed in a high state of excitement. Raskolnikov acted on the spur of the moment; Lafcadio anticipates the event and coldly calculates his chances of getting away with it.

Dostoyevsky was in search of order through chaos; Gide is in search of chaos through order. The orderliness of his plot is designed to this end; but, do what he will, it defeats him. For it ends as he did not wish it to end: in chaos. Lafcadio, the Lafcadio who as a young boy lived on intimate terms with his mother's lovers, falls in love with his half-sister and begins an affair with her, an (even for him) highly irregular procedure. The plot rather trails off and does not have the neat ending which all through the story we have been led to expect, and which we rather may suppose Gide earnestly sought and failed to find. Somewhat pathetically, Protos, the arch-criminal, voices Gide's disappointment for us when he indicates to Lafcadio the impossibility of escaping from "the social framework that hems us in" [101] . . . "without at the same moment taking us into another" [102] order of society. For there is no social group without its laws, and this is as true of those who move without the

[101] *The Vatican Swindle*, p. 255.
[102] *The Vatican Swindle*, p. 256.

law as of those who move within it. Dostoyevsky rejoiced to learn that wherever he looked in chaos there was law. Gide, who is really seeking with difficulty for the chaos that Dostoyevsky had no trouble in discovering, is dismayed by the same fact.

We have taken note of the decline which the idea of chaos has suffered in the murder which is performed in Gide's *The Vatican Swindle*. Gide's account, as we have observed, rests on a misunderstanding of Dostoyevsky on the narrowly rational, coldly unemotional, side. For an account of defection of the conception of chaos on the other side, we shall be compelled to depart from our neat scheme in order to use as illustration the work of an author, William Saroyan, who in all likelihood has not been influenced by Dostoyevsky.

Saroyan's work illustrates a defection from the grandeur of the conception of chaos on the sentimental side. Premeditated murder as an artistic subject-matter is somewhat out of the Saroyan line, as indeed is anything complicated or considered; Saroyan's characters are gentle people, and well worn from having passed through so many literary hands before they reached him. Saroyan wears his modesty inside out, so that the fleshy parts show where the curing was not effective. This leads him to make brash and bold statements of egocentric policy which he timidly likes to think he means. His characters reflect the same kind of tentatively excessive, egocentric obsession; they are concerned exclusively with their own happiness. Saroyan's characters are thus nineteenth-century English utilitarian characters, expressing a kind of Benthamite ethics: they wish to be happy, and they wish, somewhat further, happiness for their neighbors, too; and that is all.

Saroyan's work is not profound. It is the surface of things

which is being reflected to us, but a surface which wears an air assumed in imitation of the depths. For we have long ago seen through the superficiality of mere personal happiness; we know that it is desirable, of course, but we also know that it is a by-product of the pursuit of more formidable and more remote if less elusive ends. We can be happy only when we are accomplishing something which is good; we certainly cannot pursue happiness directly. Therefore we may say that we have marked happiness as a state which we should like to attain but which we can only hope to reach as a secondary reward for the achievement of something primary in the way of goals.

But Saroyan is not aware of these issues; his methods are direct and his ends simple. Chaos is introduced into all of Saroyan's work, but the task of chaos is not to add to confusion; it is to eliminate complexity and organization. Chaos in the stories and plays of Saroyan has the quixotic task of keeping everything orderly and simple at the level of elemental order and simplicity. To shatter social organization, to discard established customs and institutions, to mock at folkways and mores, marks a negative approach to the human scene. To launch the attack, however, is not enough; one must also be prepared with something positive which one wishes to establish when the obstacles have been removed. Saroyan does indeed have a plan. He wishes everyone to be happy, in elementary ways; that is his plan. And when higher levels of culture are done away with, and everyone goes back to being himself (assuming that the self is quite simple and aimed at simple happiness), the world will be a better place.

Saroyan believes so firmly in this Cinderella goal of life that he is even willing to see murder committed to reach

it. In his play, *The Time of Your Life*, Joe shoots Blick because Blick, who is described as a "heel," *i.e.*, a mean and disagreeable fellow, keeps other people from being happy. Everyone, we are assured, only wants to be happy in simple, uncomplicated ways. The social milieu makes no sense at all in any other terms. There is no set of intelligible social relations in the light of which we are able to orient ourselves. The social order consists in the individual's right to be as chaotic as possible in his pursuit of lightweight, sensual happiness. Willie, the idiot who devotes all his time and money to playing an automatic marble game, is a sympathetic character (but for his relations to the marble game and for his naïveté, not for the marble game's relations to him, which Saroyan forgets, are rather complex, as those of all complicated social tools are apt to be). In the last act, everyone gets the happiness he wants, and the happy ending rests upon a firm foundation in the murder of Blick, which somehow is considered too trivial and justified to dim the desired solution which it is instrumental in bringing about. We are led to assume not only that the social order, through the law, will not interfere but also that the moral order, through the sense of responsibility or conscience, will not interfere, either. The simple life of happiness has won by means of chaos.

There is a point here which is very well worth noting. The man, Blick, is killed because he interferes with the happiness of others. By happiness, Saroyan intends to convey the notion of the individual right to random action. If the individual is to be happy, he must be free to 'obey that impulse,' to do whatever he feels like doing, on the assumption that what he feels like doing will always be good and aimed at the happiness of others, although certainly in the case of Blick's own untrammeled actions, there was no such

good either of intention or of effect. But Blick and evil intentions aside, it is just possible that two persons who were equally good and equally simple and equally untrammeled in their impulse to perform whatever random actions they wished to perform might come into random conflict and thus defeat the purpose of their freedom by denying them happiness. In other words, two persons, each inspired by the simple desire to be happy, and performing random actions in the pursuit of that end, might each be the innocent and unintentional cause of the unhappiness of the other. Thus the individual end sought, as elementary as we make it, still requires a social framework. This social framework, which, while capable of restricting individual freedom, is also capable of allowing it and in this way of making it possible, is viewed by Saroyan as being inevitably a restrictive force. Thus we may conclude that chaos in Saroyan's hands is an instrument aimed at the elimination of social organization in favor of the achievement of the tenuous individual salvation of personal happiness. The whole treatment is sentimental and conventional, as we should expect that it would be. The sentiment is emphasized as though it were an artistic virtue, and the conventionality is hidden behind the screen which the ingredient of chaos furnishes. Chance does not beget order and indeed is not expected to do so in the picture which Saroyan draws. Chance is the reward bestowed upon those who abandon higher order in favor of lower order, he would lead us to believe. Chance is its own excuse for being; and as for order, if we love our fellow men it must be held down to a minimum. This is the message Saroyan comes to bring us.

We have said at the beginning of this study that the artist seeks for universal significance and value among singular

persons and occurrences. We have further asserted that the search for consistency and inclusiveness of such significance and value can consist in elements of order amidst the utmost in chaos and confusion. Chaos, seen in the light of the proper perspective, is nothing more than the field of population of orderly relationships; as such it has been interpreted by the very greatest artists after the fashion of a kind of statistical symbolism; lesser artists are discouraged or frightened by the evidences of power which the spectacle of chaos displays. We have sought for an illustration of the principle that chance begets order with the purpose of showing how it is presented symbolically, and we have chosen for our example three contrasted instances of literary murder as devised in fiction by a man of genius, by a man of great talent, and by a man of mere talent, respectively. Nothing more remains to be done except to draw some general conclusions.

All three literary artists have sought in chaotic and chance events for elements of some sort of order. The chaos in the work of Dostoyevsky is aimed at the improvement of the social order, at the establishment of a better society, albeit by means of individual salvation. The chaos in the work of Gide is aimed at existing society based upon amoralism. The chaos in Saroyan is aimed against existing society in favor of individual order without any social hindrances: a kind of hedonistic anarchy. All three see clearly the closely knit relationship between chaos or chance on the one hand and order or law on the other; they differ sharply, however, in the way they evaluate this relationship. Dostoyevsky, who is anxious to include as great an abundance of existence as possible in his system, is delighted by the fact that he must encounter so much of chaos on his way toward order. Gide is dismayed, discouraged and frightened by the fact that

everywhere he looks for chaos, he can only find order; and he is compelled by this fact to narrow his hold on what he can approve of in existence. Saroyan deplores the close connection between chaos and order, which he instinctively labels respectively good and bad, and he seeks to eliminate the order. Dostoyevsky is a Christian realist; Gide is a nominalistic materialist; Saroyan is a nominalistic solipsist. Dostoyevsky believes in the reality of objective ideals and values, and he finds ample evidence for his belief among the crudest of material facts and experiences. Gide believes only in those facts and experiences, and in the right of man to derive what crumbs of sensual pleasure and comfort he can from them. Saroyan believes only in the sole reality of physical particulars, in man the feelings of the individual, and denies the reality of whatever interferes with the enjoyment and expression of those feelings. At Dostoyevsky's hands the idea of chaos reaches its highest function as a literary preoccupation, almost transcending literature itself. It suffers a sharp and successive decline at the hands of his successors, until indeed it is almost meaningless. Dostoyevsky's belief in the reality of possible values makes his work great. Gide's and Saroyan's disbelief in the reality of such values in any broad social sense allows their work to degrade the very functions which it is the task of great literature to elevate.

Chapter XIX

THE MASTER MYTH AND THE MODERN ARTIST

THE low opinion in which the fine arts are generally held today together with the paucity of great art may to a large extent be due to the divorce between the artist and his audience. The public has its popular arts of the radio and motion pictures, the popular novel, the swing band and comic cartoons. But it derides the fine arts as 'highbrow,' *i.e.*, pretentious and dull, and will have nothing to do with them. The result is the stagnation and even retrogression of the fine arts. These try to struggle on as best they can, of course; but the results in a population so vast as our own are little more than pitiful. Let us consider the drama, for instance. An average theatre in New York does not seat more than two thousand persons, and few of these are devoted to the fine arts; this in a city of some eleven million. In ancient Athens, the Theatre of Dionysius could permit thirty thousand spectators to witness a play by Aeschylus. Perhaps the comparison is not a fair one. Perhaps we should compare with this not a full-sized theatre in New York City but what is known as a little theatre. The average little theatre has a seating capacity of

about two hundred or three hundred. It is in these theatres that the serious efforts would be made. A good example of this kind of development is the Abbey Theatre in Dublin earlier in the century, where, for the first time, many of the plays of Yeats, Synge, Robinson and O'Casey were shown.

What is true of the theatre is equally true of the other arts. The theatre is by nature a popular art, but the less popular arts are correspondingly ill attended. Modern sculpture and painting are seen by few persons and understood by less. Rare examples of modern music are dutifully given a first hearing and then abandoned to their anonymous fate. Modern architecture—the buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright, for example—is still a curiosity. The 'modern dance' of Martha Graham is hardly understood. And the list could be multiplied indefinitely. The separation of the fine arts from the wider public, which, potentially at least, ought to appreciate and encourage them, is almost complete.

When the contemporary artist is questioned as to this almost fatal estrangement, he makes a temporal explanation. He says that we live in an inartistic age, that the times are not propitious for art. How can we have great art when, as Whitman asserted, great art goes with great audiences, and we do not have the great audiences? The explanation of the artist is an instance of the fallacy of *petitio principii*, of assuming implicitly on faith that which it sets out to prove.

It is evident that we shall have to seek elsewhere for an explanation, and so we turn next to the art critic and aesthetician. They are more articulate but present a somewhat similar argument in asserting that the artist of today suffers from the lack of a wide and appreciative public because he is cut off and isolated by the very nature of modern

society. In an age of emphasis on science, the artist is neglected and his work ignored. Science is inimical to art, and the search for scientific truth has preempted the place which in former cultures has been occupied by the search for beauty. But the blame cannot so easily be shifted and the responsibility avoided. For the artist, too, is in search of truth, which Keats refused to separate from beauty; and if everything is grist to the artist's mill, as well it should be, then an age of science should only be one in which new opportunities are uncovered to art. If art is neglected, could it not be because the artist has not kept up with his opportunities and has failed to produce for the new age the kind of art which its new interests have demanded?

The argument has frequently been given an economic turn. The socialist criticism of capitalist society finds all imaginative effort stifled by the class control of the means of production. So long as the present type of social order prevails, it is claimed, the artist is sure to be defeated in his efforts to satisfy the artistic requirements and longings of the masses. In this variety of argument, a confusion has been made between what is important and what is importunate. The economic level provides the means for art; it does not provide the end. Art has flourished in periods when it had to depend upon the fickle patronage of the great and the powerful, and in a sense it must always be so—no matter who the powerful may happen to be or what interests they represent. When the artist is determined to work, when he has energetic aesthetic drives behind him, he seems able to accomplish his task despite the economic difficulties. Never has there been a period when more money was squandered for art products than now; and if the artist cannot do his

best work under the present circumstances, it cannot be for the economic reasons offered.

The last argument which we shall have to examine is the mythological. The mythological argument introduces the opposition of science to art again but under quite another guise. It rests upon the relations between the pure sciences and the fine arts. Science, it asserts, has overthrown the old mythologies, which cannot resist the impact of the search for facts, relations and laws. The scientific method with its emphasis upon elements of analysis leaves no room for the old myths, or, if you like, replaces the older, qualitative mythologies with a newer, abstract one which hardly lends itself to artistic treatment. Science in every way is inimical to art; it is denotative, structural and abstract, whereas art is connotative, substantial and concrete. Hence there can be no mythology of science upon which art could build or from which it could work. Science holds the social belief of the day. Being cut off from science means, for art, being cut off also from society so far as fundamental beliefs are concerned. Hence the artist of the day is isolated and has no social subject-matter. He is a puzzled fellow, chiefly concerned with methods for making the clearest possible statement of his own bewilderment.

Let us compare the position of the modern artist with that of the artist of Greece in the fifth century *B.C.* The Greeks had a body of folk myth, an epos, which was available to everyone who wished to take advantage of it or to use it in some form of art. The epos is no doubt the classic source of great art: a body of social beliefs accepted by many people for centuries has a qualitative strength on which the artist can freely draw with tremendous effect. The folk poets used it, poets like the *Homeridae*, and the results were folk poems

such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, eternal monuments of art. The individual poets used it, dramatists like Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides, and the results were the great trilogies, plays like the *Oresteia*, the greatest masterpieces of art. What legends have we like the siege of Troy, in which men and gods took sides in the creation of an historic event of such proportions that men are writing about it still? What myths can we compare with the tragedy of the house of Atrides, with its sealed doom, the anger of Clytemnestra, the prophecies of Cassandra, the revenge of Orestes, the voluble parade depicting the remorseless logic of events? What, the argument runs, have we today for the artist to draw on to compare in any way with this rich heritage? We have a few political heroes, such as Abraham Lincoln and George Washington; and we have a few local legends, such as that of the headless horseman of Sleepy Hollow. But these are small in comparison with the epos of the Greeks, and are nothing like the size required to support a great artist who wishes to build a massive art which is as wide as human experience and as deep as belief.

The mythological argument deserves to be considered with much seriousness, partly because it includes to some extent the valid part of the claim of previous arguments, but chiefly because the reply to it contains a way out of the dilemma and a suggestion as to how the modern artist could find the key to his own problem. This argument constitutes a justification of the defection of the modern artist in terms of the society in which he is forced to live. It seeks to place the failure of art squarely upon the shoulders of the social group—to lay it particularly to the responsibility of one institution in that group, namely, the institution of science. Even if we admit, what some claim—that the beliefs sponsored

by science, the elements of modern physics, the entities of Freudian psychology, are in themselves a new mythology—the fact remains that science has destroyed the old artistically potential mythologies of the past and replaced them with a new mythology entirely lacking in artistic potentials. Thus the blame for the failure of modern art is not placed on the modern artist or on anything to do directly with art, but is rather transferred to another institution and to society as a whole in the sense in which society functions as a social milieu for art. It is not the main purpose of the present discussion to refute the argument or merely to show that the responsibility for the failure lies elsewhere; that would be a negative and fruitless exercise, useful perhaps in connection with something more positive but worthless alone. What is aimed at here is a suggestion for the solution of the dilemma. We are not, in the final analysis, so much concerned with the proper blame for the failure of modern art as we are with its redirection and possible consequent revival.

Any argument which tries to hold the modern artist blameless because he lacks the equipment which the artists of some previous period possessed is sure to be a faulty one. Ours is a knowledgeable age. So far as equipment goes, we seem to have techniques which reach farther than the purposes for which we have learned to use them. Nor is this true only for the physical technologies. Our knowledge of history, thanks to the rational considerations and painstaking laboratory methods of the historians, extends far beyond anything known in any previous culture. In the fields of the social studies, although not yet sciences, great strides have been made, at least in the business of collecting data. Anthropology, ethnology and social psychology have made us familiar with the beliefs of other cultures, both of our own

and of other types. How, then, can it be said that the modern artist lacks equipment which the previous periods of great art did not lack? The specific reference of this charge is, of course, to mythology. We lack a rich, beautiful and symbolic mythology on which our artists could work, it is asserted.

That we lack a parochial mythology is true, but the excuse, all the same, is a lame one, for it means that we do not have the particular limitations that have aided, but at the same time to some extent thwarted, the artist of the earlier cultures. In its place we have a wider and more magnificent conception. We have an extensive knowledge of the master myth. By the 'master myth' is meant the myth of the year god: his success in the spring; hubris, or divine insolence in the summer; nemesis in the fall; and ruin in the winter, and his death and consequent resurrection in the following spring. This wide pattern, representing the four seasons in the cycle of the year, appears in various disguises and particular turns, such as the king of the sacred wood, the scapegoat who is resurrected, or the slayer who is himself slain. The master myth is no recent fabrication; indeed, it is no fabrication at all. It is an abstraction from the myths of many times, places and peoples, made possible by the studies of comparative mythology. The work of Sir James George Frazer, particularly in the twelve volumes of *The Golden Bough*, supplemented by the labors of many other investigators has made the picture of the master myth clear for us. And still other scholars have arisen to show us its relevancy to the classic period of ancient Greece; among these may be mentioned especially Gilbert Murray.

To say that we know mythology in the abstract in the form of the master myth is not to say that we do not have hold of something concrete. The abstract in this sense is

no mere creature of the imagination but the result of the empirical study of many concretions. It represents not a departure from the true nature of actuality but rather the very essence of actuality. Instead of the thin outline of mythology, which those who hold all abstractions to be unreal would expect, we have the spectacle of mythology itself. An untrue or vaporous abstraction would be inapplicable; but, as one philosopher has observed, there is nothing more applicable to concrete actuality than a valid high abstraction. The master myth is no mere substitute for a particular mythology; it is a guiding force in terms of which the greatest art could be discovered. The master myth means in effect that our artists have a greater opportunity than was afforded Greek artists of the fifth century *B.C.* because we know a greater number of myths on the one hand and more about myths on the other.

Let us see what has happened to those artists who have and those who have not used the master myth, as an illustration of the thesis which we have been advancing. We can distinguish three different responses which have been made to the problem of the lack of a concrete mythology by the artists of modern Europe. These are (a) the employment of an outworn mythology, (b) the substitution of a private and synthetic mythology, and (c) the employment of the master myth. We shall devote a few words to examples of each of these.

(a) The employment of an outworn mythology has been an all too familiar spectacle in European letters. Most common is the attempt of the modern artists (and the term, modern, is employed here to mean the European artist of the last several hundred years) to employ a mythology not of their own culture but taken from the hallowed tradition

which had been so ably treated by the classic artists. In general, the English poets have been in the habit of employing Greek and Latin mythology. To the extent to which Latin mythology and arts tended to become a slavish imitation of Greek models, there is no worthwhile Latin art. And the mythology of the ancients as employed by the English poets has the charm of old period furniture but is never endowed with belief. It is not doubtful whether Wordsworth expected to hear "old Triton blow his wreathéd horn"; it is, to the contrary, quite certain that to Wordsworth as well as to his audience the god was a mere literary figure, in the unfortunate modern sense in which no figure should be literary and no literature figurative. Despite the beauty of Milton's poetry, it is to be wondered whether it does not suffer somewhat from its dependence upon "rough satyrs" and "fauns with clov'n heel" in which no one, not even Milton, believed any more. The employment in poetry of a mythology in which belief no longer resides may not hurt the poetry, in the strict technical sense in which the essence of poetry depends upon the established rhythm of language, but is sure to render it precious. And there is something certainly overprecious about the best of Milton's poetry, despite its greatness.

(b) The substitution of a private and synthetic mythology is not a common occurrence but it has been attempted, on the whole unsuccessfully, by at least one major artist of the period under consideration. William Blake has been responsible for a mythology of his own devising, although his fame and the solid part of his achievement do not owe anything to this side of his efforts. Blake's fame as an artist rests upon his drawings, his *Poetical Sketches*, his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* and other poems in this genre. It emphat-

ically does not rest upon *Tiriel* or *The Four Zoas*. We should have to range very far afield to find anyone who has ever cared a fig for Los or Enitharmon, Urthona or Urizen. It is questionable whether mythologies can be constructed so. Sacred books, however written, always seem to be the products of social belief. The past lays no onus on the future in this respect, but a mythology intended to be accepted cannot be constructed synthetically; it must be believed by someone, at least by the person inventing it. Now, if Blake believed in the existence of his creatures, it must have been only on occasion. Belief is the life-blood of imaginative characters and events; it is the guaranty of their likelihood and viability. Blake's *Old Testament* parody has been believed by no one, and the discerning reader, despite Blake's wide fame, turns instinctively to his lyrics—the tigers and innocent children, the thorns and roses and gardens of love—in which the value of his work actually does reside. The mythologies which artists use are not the invention nor yet the discovery of the artists themselves. These come to them usually from some outside source, from some institution in the culture, such as religion or war; for a myth is the expression of a whole people, a social group as group and not merely as a collection of individuals. No single imagination or credence has ever been able to devise a mythology. One man's psyche is not sufficiently inclusive or energetic, for a true mythology is the product of a kind of supernal effort made by the implicit dominant ontology of a whole culture, the accepted metaphysical beliefs regarding reality held consciously or (more often) unconsciously by the members of a social group, which together with its tools and institutions, comprises a human culture. The individual artist is hardly equal

to the gigantic effort which such a collective enterprise entails.

(c) The employment of the master myth has not been long an opportunity available to artists. The master myth itself is a fairly recent discovery. Anthropology, ethnology and social psychology have not been long at work, and the comparison of myths is probably not yet more than well under way, despite the definitive character of Frazer's work. The artists of the period which has witnessed the rise and early flourishing of science have escaped from mythology and the hard products of the factual and logical imagination into a dream world of actuality, an enumeration of the surface world of the phenomena which we should expect to be available to the busy journalist and reporter.

Toward the end of the second quarter of the twentieth century only one artist had succeeded in taking advantage of the glorious new opportunity. This artist is James Joyce and the work of art in which he has done so is *Finnegan's Wake*. The book begins as it ends, with the spectacle of the cycle of the year god, whose name on this occasion is Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (or Here Comes Everybody), and whose life is conveyed in the four cycles borrowed from the Italian philosopher of culture, G. Vico. The events of his fall, demise and resurrection are plain enough, though their presentation is obscure. Part of the obscurity, of which so many of Joyce's readers complain, is due to the terrific intensity of condensation, part to the unpreparedness of his readers for the kind of effort he is making and the kind of ambition he represents. These are elements in his favor. A great deal of the obscurity no doubt is also due to the difficulties which confront the pioneer, the confusion which is the inevitable result of the struggle with a new field of

endeavor. Joyce, it is almost certain, was the first and not the last of the giants of art to have the temerity to grapple with the forces of the new master myth in the form of a contemporary work of art which is, at the same time, as local as though it had been composed by a hedge poet.

This romantic reaction of the last two centuries, with its literalism and yet with its denial of the cultural significance of the age of scientific applications, was able to overlook the mythological values brought about by science itself. The result has been some small, if beautiful, works of art and the complete absence of any gigantic efforts, together with a divorce between the practitioner of the fine arts and his wider public. Readers who perceive that the thesis is here being advanced that the reconciliation of artist and public and the revival of art are possible only through the method which Joyce pioneered obscurely will be skeptical, as well they might. But first steps are always faltering steps. Subsequent artists whose work is more immediately clear will not have the difficulties either of Joyce or of his public, and they will not work exactly after his fashion but they will employ the master myths or fragments of it as he does. Yet Joyce's accomplishment itself may prove to be no mean one. The fact remains that the pure sciences hold the mass belief of our culture and represent the best of our efforts to discover the nature of reality. Hence its entities and processes must furnish the best myths. The master myth must be interpreted in terms of what exists today, and its corresponding response must be revealed in the implicit dominant ontology which dwells in the psyche of every individual in the culture, dimly yet powerfully manifesting itself upon occasion. If the artist by his use of the master myth can bring about one of those occasions, the response will be terrific and the fine artist

once more a great artist and, at the same time, united again with his public.

The weaving of scientific entities and processes into the fabric of the master myth so that the whole strikes a familiar note in the implicit dominant ontology awaits a greater artist than Joyce. Yet only so can the force of the folk in an age of science be impressed on the face of the arts of the day in such a way as to awaken an enthusiastic reception by the masses of the members of the culture, which is, after all, always the artist's aim.

Chapter XX

THE CONCAVE FAVOR

VALUES, or qualities, as everyone knows, can be defined; but they must be experienced to be sufficiently known. No matter how involved or how painstaking an account of the color, blue, may be, it is only the person who has seen some blue things who can justifiably claim that he knows what is meant by the word, blue. This necessity for experience in the understanding of qualities does not imply anything one way or the other concerning their subjective nature. The simplicity of qualities has been misleading, for they are highly complex affairs, self-determinative and, so far as our powers of apprehension are concerned, resistant. Qualities are elusive not because they are subjective but because they are objective. Anything that experience could control would have to be more or less amenable to the persuasion of experience. Now, qualities may be completely knowable only by the method of direct, qualitative experience; but that is quite another thing from saying that they are entirely matters of experience. Qualities, or values, are independent of experience but must be experienced to be known; thus far we have not discovered a

method for communicating abstractly the feelings aroused by the direct experience of them.

If ordinary, irreducible qualities are difficult of apprehension, how much more so must be the aesthetic quality which is that of beauty. The experience of beauty is also a common quantity, but the common experience of beauty is felt to be unusual in that it carries values of an extraordinary sort. It is, in other words, the usual kind of exceptional experience. The experience of beauty, though ordinary enough, is always felt to be strange. Thus it is recognized by all and sundry that the values of art are the most elusive of all. To approach aesthetic values, then, means to be ready to meet the objections which confront the investigator of qualities, and, in addition, those which confront the investigator of the special quality of aesthetics which we have come to know by the name of beauty.

How can we best undertake an explanation of beauty? The time-honored methods still remain the only ones of which we have any knowledge. We can approach the quality of aesthetics through a presentation of its exemplification in the best works of art, or we can make some attempt to get at the principles of art. The former has the limitation inherent in all attempts to encompass universals through particulars; the whole eludes the enumeration of parts, for the whole organization always exhibits emergent qualitative differences which do not exist at the lower level definable by parts. The latter has the limitation of assuming that which it is expected to prove, thus committing the fallacy of circularity, and laying the argument open to the charge of dogmatism.

There are other reasons for objecting to the appeal to aesthetic principles for an explanation of aesthetic value. Cer-

tainly the apprehension of artistic values is aided by a knowledge of aesthetics, but it is not guaranteed thereby. Many of the greatest writers (though not the *very* greatest) have been naïve, uneducated men; and this fact constitutes a piece of evidence which would seem to indicate that a study of the existing knowledge concerning beauty is no prerequisite for the discovery of the beautiful. On the other hand, there are assuredly artists who are erudite and who wear their erudition so easily that it helps rather than hinders their artistic work. Next to Keats, the ignorant stable boy, we may place the equally great name of Dostoyevsky, the self-conscious artist who wrote begging for his copy of Hegel from his place of exile in Siberia. Just as there can be great artists who lack a knowledge of artistic principles, so too there can probably be appreciators who lack the knowledge of the principles involved in aesthetics. Unfortunately, the latter have left no records, but on the other side of the ledger we do have the records of men like James Gibbons Huneker whose gusto of appreciation was in no wise dimmed by his familiarity with the rational aspect of those values he enjoyed so much.

Left to ourselves and confronted with the choice that tradition has hallowed, we must confess that the approach to values *qua* values must be left to the artist and the appreciator, and that the student of aesthetics must opt for the search for principles. Through a knowledge of principles, undreamed-of wonders might be accomplished, were it not for the objections of those who argue that perhaps this is true, but that the stumbling block to its attainment is the solitary yet sufficient fact that principles, rational principles, in the case of aesthetics, do not exist. Rationality they conceive as the opposite and antithesis of art, so that when prin-

ciples enter by the door art flies out of the window. Thus we cannot satisfy them by appealing to the principles themselves, since they will only have to declare that the appeal invented or in some way gave rise to the principles, and that in any case neither has anything whatsoever to do with artists or with works of art.

The approach to the qualitative aspect of artistic values through the rational aspect, then, is sure to meet with failure; but is the opposite true? If we approach the rational aspect through the qualitative, have we any hope of success? Of course if the rational aspect does not exist to be discovered, there is no point in working toward it, and much indeed depends upon the manner in which we pursue our inquiry. An impediment to the successful outcome of such a venture as the one we now propose lies in the fact that we must work with and through language, and there is an incurable rationality to all communication by means of language. Denotative language is largely rational, but we may avoid such indirect rationality by seeking to lean on connotation rather than on denotation, and on the implied rationality of denotative remarks intended to convey a message of irrationality, such as would be exhibited in an attack on the validity of logic in art, for example. We must expect to make prominent those aspects of art and of the confessions of artists which were not featured in the original presentation. The effort is worth making, whether it is entirely successful or not, since such evidence as it is able to adduce will be more than was considered pertinent before.

We have said that we must assume the existence in the world of the rational principles of art which exist to be discovered, but much the same thing must be held to be true also concerning the values of art. There are those who

maintain that the values of art are nothing more than the feelings which they arouse in us, and that they have no other kind of existence. It will be well to discuss this point for just a moment before we go on with the main part of our argument.

All of us have at some time or other experienced the feeling which we have tried to describe in the terms, 'That object is beautiful.' We have also experienced the sensation which we have tried to describe in the terms, 'That feeling is wonderfully pleasurable.' The second of these two experiences could have been occasioned by any number of things; we could have enjoyed the taste of honey, the sound of music, the view from a mountain, the feel of velvet, the stretch of our muscles. In each of these we have been conscious of our own direct participation. What makes the first type of experience differ from the second is the absence from the first type of the dominance of this feeling of participation. Pleasurable experiences are characterized by their happening to *us;* but aesthetic experiences are otherwise, for they are characterized by the quiet passivity of our ecstatic joy at their happening. Obviously, in the case of aesthetic experience, as in the case of pleasurable experience, there is some order of personal participation, only, in the former case the pleasure is secondary and diffused. it is extensive rather than intensive. It is not 'that for the sake of which' the experience is commonly sought after and cherished. In the presence of the beautiful, we stand not only in awed respect but also in gratitude for the very existence of the thing which is beautiful. We find the larger part of our satisfaction in being companion-pieces to the existence of the beautiful. We do not wish to do anything about beauty; we cannot hope to own it, and it seems to require no furthering. It is

what it is, just as it is, and we are more than content with its mere existence in a world that it shares with us. The pleasure that we derive from it is chiefly that of satisfaction at the existence in the world of such partial perfection as the beautiful thing represents.

If now we take the viewpoint of metaphysical realism which insists that there is nothing in our experience which is not representative of something external occasioning that experience, we may ask what it is in the world which has occasioned the experience of the beautiful to be what it is. The feeling which we have described—all too inadequately—as the quiet passivity of our ecstatic joy at the happening, or existence, of the beautiful, must have some objective counterpart; and that counterpart must be something other than the beautiful thing itself. It must consist, in some way or other, in the beautiful. In these terms, then, what is the beautiful? Pursuant with our resolution not to put the answer to this question directly or in denotative form, at least not here, but rather to approach it indirectly through the methods of such a type at our disposal, which we have declared to be those of indirection, of connotation and of reinterpretation, we must be prepared to call upon the dark powers of irrationality: the manic, the chthonic and the oracular.

We must expect to do so, however, in a special sort of way, for our purpose is widely at variance with that of those who pursue the irrational for its own sake. In distinction from them, we seek among the extremes of irrationality in art for the clue to the rational. The search is clearly no disinterested one, conducted dispassionately for the sake of discovering the given. We shall select and carefully sift our evidence, as indeed everyone is forced to do; we admit

that the selection and the sifting are made candidly from the point of view afforded by the holding of an hypothesis. And to those who would charge us with merely completing a vicious circle, we may answer that our method is the method of all successful investigation. The world is wide, and full of a number of things; and to make an inquiry without first having in mind what it is that we wish to discover is to discover everything—and nothing; hardly more than whatever is closest at hand arbitrarily picked up. Only in the light of a specific inquiry can a null result be meaningful, while the discovery of that which we have been seeking is more of an allowance than a proof. Hence in this inquiry, as in so many others, we have much to gain from success and little to lose from failure. Let us, then, visit the madhouses of the irrationalists, there to see rationality confirmed.

We may begin with that art movement which entitles itself 'surrealism.' The theory and the practices of surrealism indicate the limits to which irrationality can go in a given direction. Occasioned most likely by Freudian psychoanalysis, and especially by Freud's comparison of the psychopathic individual, the child and the artist, the surrealists, led by Tristan Tzara, André Breton and others, endeavored to describe in art the subconscious feelings and thoughts of the neurotic and the psychotic, of psychological individuals in abnormal mental circumstances. This ambitious program of irrationality cleverly sought error at its very source, and at the same time carried on the late nineteenth-century conception of the artist and of art as something very special and as definitely in revolt against society. Artistic truth, the surrealists held, as the self-conscious subjectivistic aesthetes of the previous decades had held before them, is different from ordinary truths; artistic truths lie in the distortions of

ordinary truth. The feelings of the disordered psyche w defended as being more significant and meaningful t those of the normal person, or at least more than those of average person in his more normal moments.

Surrealism, of course, began as a cult, a vogue, and intended to do little more than *épater le bourgeois*. It the protests of the sensitive recording machine whicl the artist against the chaos of the post-war world—re the cry of the rational man (for there are few things n rational than art is at bottom) against his own painful fee of bewilderment in an irrational state of affairs. Surrea flared up and died, to all intents and purposes, some ter fifteen years ago. From Tzara to Dali is more than a chrc logical distance; it is also a logical distance. What bega a cult, a protest, ended as a paying property in the wind of a department store, at the hands of a self-conscious a who has been willing to place his fine gift of painting at disposal of a false metaphysics, perhaps merely for its sational effects. The surfaces of Dali's paintings reve technique which is excellent if somewhat old-fashioned; subject-matter follows a formula derived by deduction f the false metaphysical excesses of the Freudian psychol The formula consists simply in the fact that no two obj adjacent in space are allowed to be so adjacent if they h any reason for belonging together.

The technique of Dali is beyond question. He has reve to some of the methods of the old masters, and his wild s ject-matter is founded upon sound method. The smc finish of his paintings, the perfection of detail, the con tional drawing in which objects are exhibited as we h been thinking that we have seen them (in contradistinc to the impressionists and post-impressionists who would h

us see things for the first time as they actually appear) are more characteristic of the earlier Dutch and Italian schools than of the revolutionaries in painting in the last hundred years. Dali, in other words, has simply elected to apply a conventional technique to an unconventional subject-matter. The total effect has been to lead critics and appreciators to make a distinction between the worth of Dali's inventions and those of other and more consistent surrealists who depend upon *collage* and other similar means to keep their method in pace with the eccentricity of their subject-matter.

Dali's approach has produced a result which is not without its unintentional humor and its indirect moral. The nature of the humor has been discussed elsewhere; here we are chiefly concerned with the moral, for it is the moral which has the most bearing upon the topic in which we are most interested. To take our example of the surrealist movement from the work of Dali is an act of choice not without justification. For Dali has been busily cultivating a money crop, a statement which can be made without any intention of denying his psychoneurotic tendencies or the inverse value of his work. He could teach the advertising men many a lesson, and the public-relations counsels could benefit unostentatiously and richly from them. Yet even Dali, intent on the pursuit of the irrational, the mad, and the unconscious, runs against definite limits; for these dark powers, powerful though they may be, are not all-powerful, and sooner or later they must reckon with the greatest power of them all: logic. It so happens that there is more to the unconscious than error and deviation; there is also a large amount of the belief in what is true and valuable. There is a common social body of accepted beliefs, having a large amount of truth in them, also dwelling in the individual unconscious. Dali

therefore is narrow in his treatment of the unconscious; he only wishes it at its worst, that is when it reveals ignorance and error, delusion and discord, falsity and misdirected force. In his paintings, he fails to make the completely irrational argument; it is true of any two objects in the universe that they have many things in common, not as many, perhaps, as things bearing striking logical similarities, but still many. And in so far as the objects in Dali's paintings bear logical similarities, his purpose and his aim are defeated. Dali is an unconscious victim of the ultimate rationality of the world, which does not admit absolutes or ultimates to adhere to anything except unlimited reason.

Dali himself is often engaged in the business of exhibiting the ultimate rationality of all the ill-assorted items with which he professes to deal. This fact has been brought out occasionally in undeniable fashion. Dali submitted to the New York World Fair a painting entitled, *The Dream of Venus.* It was familiarly reminiscent of Ingres' *La Source,* and it depicted a nude woman with the head of a fish. The painting was promptly rejected by the committee which had the Amusement Area in charge. Dali quoted the committee as stating that "A woman with the tail of a fish is possible; a woman with the head of a fish is impossible." [103] Dali correctly observes that the first man who depicted a mermaid must have been a poet, but that the second man must have been a bureaucrat. He neglected to observe that the first man to devise a new type of half-fish–half-woman by simple deduction from the first type is nothing more than a bureaucrat against the grain.

There is, however, a far more interesting observation to be

[103] "Declaration of the Independence of the Imagination and the Rights of Man to His own Madness."

made in this connection. Dali, through no one's efforts but his own, is to be found on the side of artistic logicality. Bureaucracy in art, as we have seen, he denies—what true artist does not?—for art is inconsistent with bureaucracy. But the fact that works of art, and imaginative works in general, have their own inherent rationality at variance with the irrationality inherent in the standing rules of the bureaucrats concerning art is not to be denied, and indeed Dali here refused to have them denied. There is nothing at all strange about this except that it issues from Dali. It represents for him a complete reversal of roles. He is in fact making a logical point and taking a rational stand against the complete irrationality of the conventional authorities who are chiefly concerned with seeing that the artists continue to do as much as but no more than has been done by artists in the past, with extrapolating the artistic past into the future, without making any independent artistic judgments of their own; a dismal though common enough situation in which the artist plays the defender of the logic of art against those in positions of power who are preoccupied with the traditional and the conservative in terms of prudence in law and order. On the surface, Dali is the mountebank, and that is what he wishes to be; but a little underneath the surface, we discover the consistency, the parallelism, and indeed the syllogisms of the rational man in his waking state. As a result of the exigencies of the situation, and given the impure motives of the publicity seeker and the clown, there is produced a truly logical defense of a position which is essentially logical.

The pursuit of the rational has no limits; it may be developed forever. Mathematics has gone far, especially in the last few centuries, farther than most of us can comprehend; but there is a longer road still ahead. The rational opens up

vistas of the infinite, and of this view mathematics is also aware. But so far as art is concerned these are facts hard to accept. The medieval world saw rationality tied to the apron-strings of vested theology; the modern world sees rationality committed to the elevation of the prestige of science. From neither of these engagements is art able to draw any special solace, and from them she is not likely to derive any great affection for reason. What the artist does not understand, and therefore what he will not admit, is that whatever is valid in being is rational; art being valid has a legitimate claim to its share of rationality. The failure to understand this truth is one with which we can sympathize, even though we have no desire to condone it. The difficulty with the viewpoint of art is that it tends to identify a committed rationality with independent reason itself. The limitations which the medieval church placed upon the further discovery of universals were not consistent with reason. The rational validity of science cannot be used as an argument in favor of the confining of reason to that which is scientific. And art has no artistic right to deny reason, simply because a limited and restricted rationality has been sponsored by authorities which art does not admit to be its own.

Driven by the prejudice against rationality because of its formal, institutional affiliations, the artists of the early twentieth century have flirted with the dark forces of irrationality as these are found in the psychological order, especially in the illogical order of concepts and images experienced by neurotics and psychotics; and as they are found, too, in the historical order, especially in the conflicts, the contradictions and the disvalues of the world of action and reaction. Here broken fulfillment, fragmentary satisfaction, short-term bafflement, and all the host of partial things exhibiting

their aspect of incompleteness, contribute to the general confusion in which art mistakenly supposes that it recognizes its comrades in arms in the war being waged upon rigid order, philistine ceremonial, and conventional circumstance. As soon as the artist can be made to understand that rigid orders stand in the way of Order, that philistine ceremonial is a poor substitute for the ontological demands of procedure, and that conventional circumstance does not necessarily carry with it the disapprobation of the significant event, contemporary art may learn to sever its connections with the irrational, for the irrational is fundamentally inartistic.

The early poems of T. S. Eliot, the Missouri Anglophile, offer interesting exemplification of the last point. The early poems are alone chosen for illustration because it is in these poems that Eliot exhibited the struggles which are characteristic of those of the modern artist. In the later poems, Eliot is no longer searching; he has found what he was looking for, and what he has found can be of interest to Eliot only. In every age there are literary men and other artists who symbolize something for the age but whose symbolism is meaningless later. It is probably true that there are few poets writing today whose work will date more completely than will Eliot's. It is safe to predict that the same Eliot who has occasioned such a furor in poetic circles in the nineteen thirties will be forgotten altogether except as a kind of historical oddity or curiosity in the nineteen sixties. However, the fact remains that he does have a lesson for today, and that it is to be found in his early poems. What is this lesson? It centers around a core of essential irrationality, sought in the first poems of Eliot a little more self-consciously and (despite the obvious mannerisms) a little more sincerely than it is in the world of Dali—more sincerely and also more de-

liberately. No creatures are borrowed from the unconscious, indeed the method of Eliot is just the opposite of Dali's. For by placing side by side the conventional idioms and literary tags from the classical world, Eliot endeavors to deny not the unconscious but the creatures of consciousness.

The poems have been quoted too often to require extensive repetition, but we may cite one or two. Witness, for instance, Eliot's attack on organized religion, that same organized religion which later enveloped him, in the poem in which he compares the Church to the hippopotamus, not entirely to the detriment of the hippopotamus.

At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,
But every week we hear rejoice
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way—
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

The Church fares better than the hippopotamus but only in an ironical fashion. In poem after poem Eliot sought to show his distaste for our puny and irrational lot, in comparison with the titanic and orderly proportions of the natural world, by the method of crude juxtaposition, at first in an humorous way but then with some querulousness that grew eventually petty and boring.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;

The person in the Spanish Cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees. . . .

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonored shroud.

With Eliot as with Dali we have before us the spectacle of a distinct artistic gift, of which there can be little doubt, perverted to a weak and unworthy subject-matter. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of some living expression of metaphysical denial or ultimate skepticism. Such art has no future, for art itself has an inherent positive philosophy. The disciples of artistic irrationalism are working against the artistic grain; they are compelled to be imitators, parodists even. There is certainly no future in art for continual negation and denial. The sole legitimate function of such a negative method is to sweep away dead wood and to make room for the new and the valid. It has been observed time and again that there was nothing essentially negative about Baudelaire's denials except the form of his expression. Within the framework of power of the *Fleurs du Mal* lies the most terrific acceptance of the nature of things, including the worst things. Not so the works of the modern skeptics and disillusionists.

The poems of Eliot are those of a man with a weak stomach. He wishes to have things as they ought to be; but then who does not? In the meanwhile he is unable to put

up with things as they are, and this is a labor which all of us are called on to bear. He has managed to turn this attitude of the psyche pained by disorder and lowered values into works of art simply because what he has to say represents what so many of us have been feeling in the period between wars. Yet the viewpoint has no future because it is not what people always and inevitably must feel; it is by no means universal. It is the art of poetry, which is profoundly rational, expressing ideas which are inartistic and irrational. The ugly is not necessarily inartistic, but cosmic denial and irrationality assuredly are. However, Eliot has not been entirely successful in his efforts to compel poetry to express the inartistic; since, as we have observed in the case of Dali, to push the irrational too far is to end in rationality. How does Eliot, albeit unwittingly, accomplish this? We have described his method as one of crude juxtaposition. By contrasting things which do not belong together, the illogicality of their togetherness is emphasized, and by tacit implication the existence of some natural order is asserted. If the things which Eliot associates do not belong together, if Sir Philip Sidney does not accord well with the "penny world" of Kentish Town and Golder's Green, it is only because there is a logical order somewhere in which each has its proper place, and because there are things, other things, with which each does belong. Thus by pushing to their limits the examples of false juxtaposition, the being of some better and more logical position is reaffirmed.

The vogue for irrationality in art, with its accompanying reverse effect in favor of rationality, is by no means confined to painting and poetry. It is found also in prose works, for instance. Gertrude Stein, though lacking the artistic gift of Dali and Eliot, shares with them the dubious gift of being

able to accomplish with ease the opposite of the end sought. Crowding four saints into three acts stressed the need for due proportionality rather than the reverse. Nor is the quixotic accomplishment confined to literary artists. The same vogue for the irrational has spread to other arts. In music, from Schoenberg to Prokofieff, we find the same tendencies. Prokofieff's title, "The Love of Three Oranges," had the same end in view, as did also the atonality of Schoenberg. The absence of key, contrasted as it was against a traditional background of the observance of the rules of harmony, only served to stress the validity of horizontal intervals.

Thus in every case in which the overthrow of old conventions has been sought in the name of no conventions at all, the result has been to call attention to the need for some sort of conventionality, even if not the old conventions. The point is that artistic revolutions, historically necessary though they may be, to be veridical must always be engineered in the name of something positive. We do not wish to get rid of the old rules in order to have no rules, but only in order to have wider and more inclusive rules. Narrow conventions restrict; wider ones allow. We must have rules and conventions of some sort to lean on, in the arts as everywhere else. The sonnet, the picture frame and the quartet have not been used by countless artists because of moral stricture, rather because of the assistance rendered by such instruments of order. Perhaps we can now find better instruments. The only thing is that we do not wish to be confined as we have been in the past by rules and conventions that are too narrow. The human vision grows and develops, and the useful instruments of today, novel ones that we may have trouble introducing because they are such radical innovations, will constitute the impediments of tomorrow, and will as a con-

sequence have to be done away with; but not until they have served their purpose and not until we have reason to feel that our improved perspective demands wider modes of expression. The overthrow of old conventions always comes in the shape of a battle against convention itself, and that is a great pity for it serves to confuse the issue. We are, finally, not opposed to convention; we are only opposed to old and restrictive convention; and, again, not for its age but only for its narrowness.

The effort to separate what is valid and true from what is invalid and false in what is old is part of the larger effort to eliminate time in deference to value. We wish to save what is good, whether it be old or new, just because it is good. Now, it is a fact that the element of time is called to our attention in the arts by the factor of rhythm, while the element of value is brought to attention by the presence of variations in rhythm. Mathematically exact rhythm, however, does not primarily depend upon time, as it seems to do; it depends upon certain relations which are themselves independent of time. What has value is what is *au fond* logical, so that the varied is the valuable and also the logical. The old English folk ballads, the lyrics of Campion and of Shelley, are to be preferred to such modern poems as those of Edgar Guest for one reason, because of the enormously subtle variations which the former writers are able to wring out of an adopted metrical scheme, in contrast to the perfect but painful regularity of the metrical scheme of the latter. The irrationality of the metrical scheme of Edgar Guest's poems would never succeed in making itself apparent to any literal-minded prosodist. There are rhythms more subtle than were ever dreamed of in the ordinary kind of scansion. To vary a scheme to the point where it almost ceases to be a scheme

(though not quite), much in the same way that mathematicians vary an equation in the theory of transformations, is to insist upon a rhythm which is fundamental yet hidden, and therefore more important than any which may be brought out in the usual manner of determining the major beat and of counting the number of beats to the line. It is this subtle scheme of rhythm which is independent of time and devoted to value, which the greatest of artists have always half-consciously sought.

Half-consciously; because their other half is busily engaged in operating by means of intuition, or, as it is known in logic, by induction. All artists who analyze feel ill at ease; they wish to shift as soon as possible from logic to value. Now, if logic is the analysis of value, if, that is, all qualitativeness in the universe has its relational correlate, then relations are but the other side and aspect of qualities. A proposition which is close to truth is not very far from true worth, or value. Artists understand that they must choose their postulates for works of art by leaping to them qualitatively, through intuition; but they persistently refuse to recognize, and so are unwilling to admit, that they also proceed by deduction, from postulates to variations and conclusions. Art is no less valuable and qualitative for having in it elements of logical consistency, and of deductive structure, and this is as true of those works of art devised by men who hold explicitly to an irrational aesthetics. Fortunately for them, they proceed by the artistic method which has a logical soundness and an integrity of its own. As for the unity of logic and value, it is evidenced once more by the fact that we find ourselves constantly shifting back and forth from one idiom to the other. We seek to find a geometrical shape for the things we love, and a numerical equivalent for the

things we value. Is not this the method of analogy, of figure of speech, of parable and hyperbole? Most of us, at least in the arts, tend to be Pythagoreans in reverse, for we start not with numbers but with values, yet we end with numbers just the same. And this process is no less what it is for not being conducted in any self-conscious fashion. We think in terms of lovely *curves*, of *superior* numbers. We assign shapes to the sounds that we hear, and even dimensions to the human relations that we bear. We are partly composed of relata, and there are times when this aspect of our being is uppermost. We bestow concave favors, and we express elliptic opinions. In the most ordinary of everyday affairs we betray (if often not even to ourselves) a pathetic faith in the algebraic functions and geometric systems of those values on which we live and by which we are motivated.

In this sense it follows that the irrationalists in art have builded better than they knew. They have reached out in despite of the artistic canons of irrationalism which they have officially adopted, and they have been snatched back into affirmation and consistency by the inexorable logicality of the artistic method and of the artistic materials with which they have worked. Art is incurably positive; it seeks for positive values, and it will rest content with nothing less, whatever its practitioners may choose to do or attempt to undo. Particular things are both rational and opportune, but the particularity of art is felt universally, aiming as it does at a level where truths and values ubiquitously and eternally reside. To deny life, then, and the values of existence together with the logical frame on which they are strung, is inartistic and will soon be turned round if it is attempted in art. For art has a method and a goal, and both are as large

as reaction and as sure as innovation; they cannot deny the nature of things, they can only affirm.

It is, in fact, only the appearance of things which leads us to suppose that regularity is rational and that art, which is devoted to the discovery of value, is therefore irrational. We seek relations between qualities and we seek them without benefit of mediation, and in this search we are hindered rather than aided by mediocre rational interpretations. We suppose that rationality and art are therefore at odds, but this is very far from being the case. Art is always fully present, but, at its best, unostentatious. It is the value of life, raised to the highest power. But it is also indirect, hard to discover, difficult to know. It is not like science, and it bears but the faintest resemblance to the ordinary business of life: getting a living, fighting a war, winning a wife. Life, ordinary daily social life, is something which ostensively puts up with art, but in the long run serves it. We owe the irrationalists a debt of gratitude, therefore, for doing what they had not intended to do but what we needed all the same to have done for us. For they have awakened us to the fact of the rationality of art, an understanding which is certain to lead to progress in the arts, and to a general appreciation and cultivation which could never have rested on the irrational grounds on which we once suspicioned that art did rest. By exploring the wrong path, the irrationalists have finally succeeded—we may hope this time in a wholly conscious and deliberate manner—in putting us upon the right path, a path down which art may be pursued toward greater and greater glories, stretching past the last unfolding of time toward the remote but permanent conditions of timeless values, in accordance with the omnipotent suggestions of the nature of things.

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